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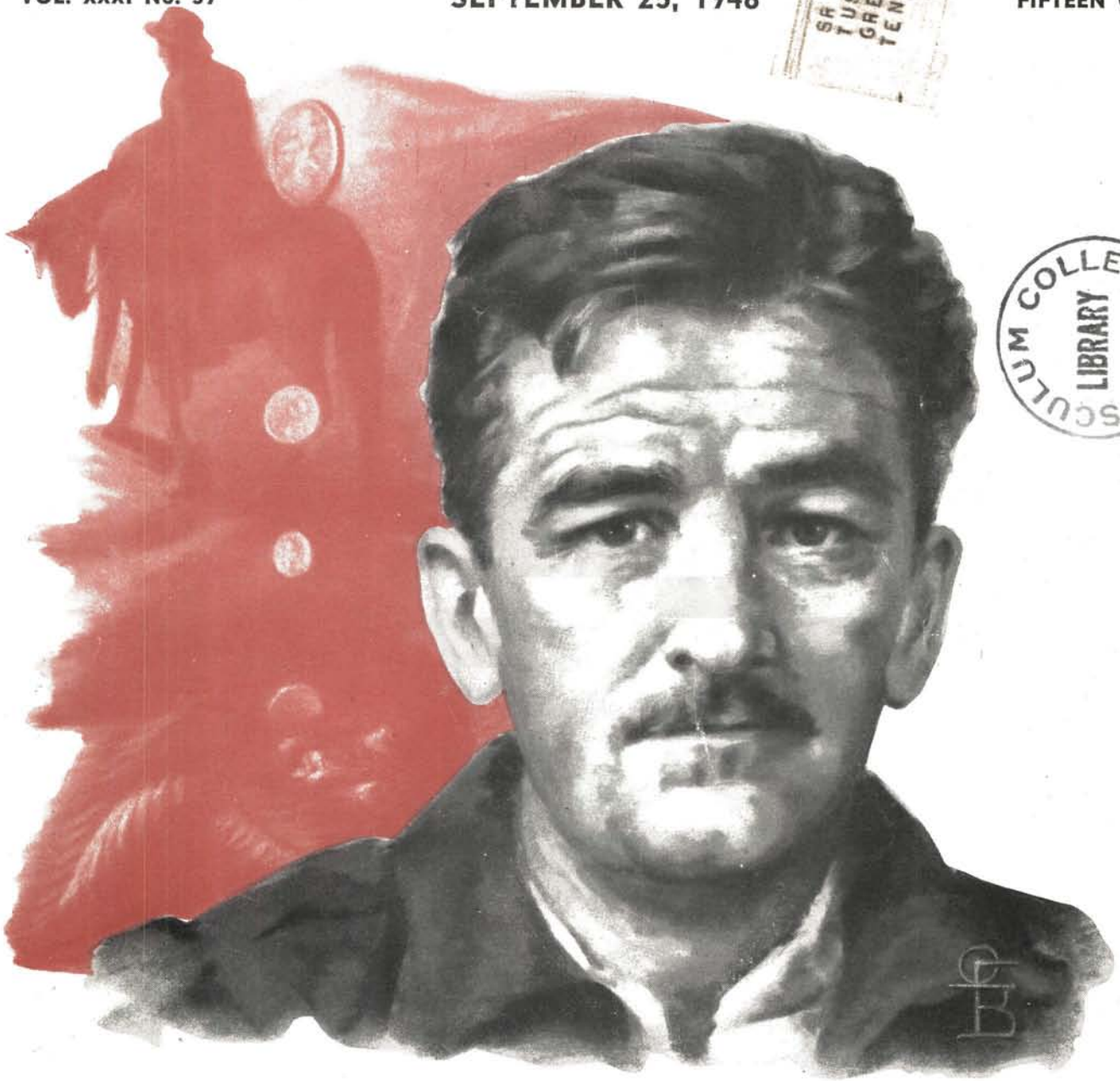

William Faulkner, author of "Intruder in the Dust." *(See page 8)*

The Critics: Cheerleaders or Cranks?

THE THEATRE
By RICHARD WATTS, Jr.

ART AND MUSIC
By ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN

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This Week

September 25, 1948

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TRADE Winds

A PROVINCETOWN SAGE once remarked that Cope Cod had three industries: fishing, tourists, and Joseph C. Lincoln. In due course Lincoln went to his just reward. A horde of artists and psychiatrists took up part of the slack, and then Peter Hunt popped up to fill the rest of the gap.

Hunt was a successful antique dealer in New York when Bill Gaston phoned him one day to invite him on a cruise to Maine. Threatening weather prompted Gaston to seek haven in Provincetown harbor. Hunt stepped ashore and said, "This is for me, boys. Leave me a tin of biscuits and a can of paint and get along to Bar Harbor without me. I'm staying here!"

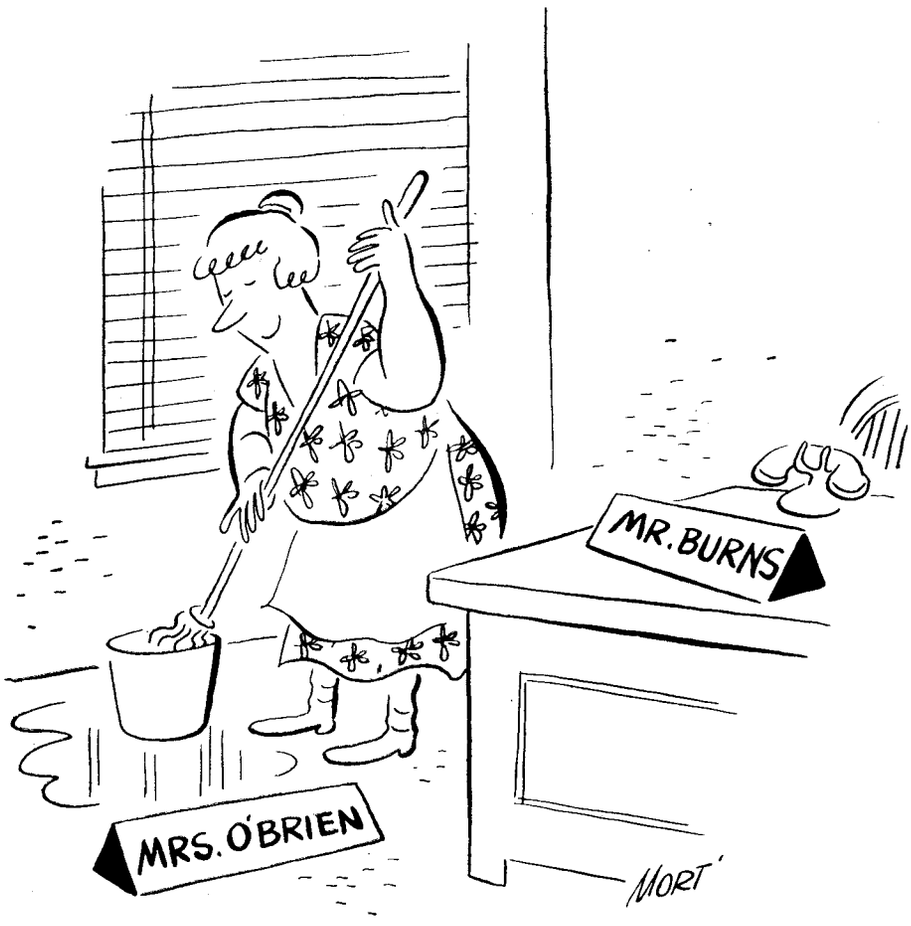
That was twelve years ago. The shop Hunt opened has never ceased expanding. It encompasses six separate buildings today, each one housing his highly individualized painted furniture and accessories. A specialist from Macy's Corner Shop discovered him, and orders from other stores all over the country followed soon after. Today his business is fabulous, although I hate to think how many perfectly good chairs, tables, and chests have been ruined by incompetent amateurs seeking to duplicate his distinctive touch. A book describing his products, "Peter Hunt's Work Shop" (Ziff-Davis), has sold over 55,000 copies, though Hunt thinks the price ($4.50) is on the high side. I pointed out that it still was half a dollar cheaper than little wooden ducks, holding a handful of cigarettes, that he makes with his left hand in about three minutes and retails at five dollars a quack. "But," said Hunt plaintively, "those ducks are *art.*" . . . Hunt's next book will be a chronicle of Cape Cod legends and personalities, with an introduction by Fleur Cowles. . . .

THE FISHERMEN and the summer residents on the Cape often find themselves at loggerheads. The fishermen persist in dumping spoiled fish, tuna heads, and gurry into Cape Cod Bay. The tides carry them onto the beaches. As Public Health Agent Joseph Matta points out, "In fighting this practice, I am working for the best interests of the fishermen themselves as well as the tourists. Everybody who has a stake in Provincetown will suffer directly or indirectly if we drive away business with waters and beaches that are polluted with decaying fish. Not only does the town's business suffer, but the situation helps to destroy that very appetite for seafood which the industry is trying so hard to develop." Every community has its peculiar problem! . . . . Anyhow, the chief attractions in this famous strip of country are not in the harbor, but the dunes and beaches on the ocean side, and the salt air that serves as a tonic, and the charming and picturesque little byways and distinctive houses that show to their best advantage as the shadows of evening are falling. . . .

THE NATIVES OF THE CAPE are not famous for accepting outsiders. A couple stopped at the Provincetown Museum the other day and asked, "Do you recommend the Gifford House? We've heard good things about it." "It's a first-class place all right," they were told, "though we understand it's under new management." The management changed in May 1902. . . . The one "outsider" everybody loved on the Cape was Eugene O'Neill, a familiar figure in Provincetown haunts in his younger days, and the inspiration for scores of budding playwrights living there today. It was O'Neill's "The Emperor Jones" that was chosen as the season's last production by the 1948 Provincetown Players, following their successful presentation of Bernard Evslin's adaptation of Henry James's "The Bostonians." . . .

TODAY, GENE O'NEILL is not only generally recognized as one of the world's greatest playwrights, but certainly the only man of letters who is responsible for the success of a national chain of roadside restaurants. Those familiar, orange-roofed hostelries of Howard Johnson, whose twenty-eight flavors of ice cream tickle the palates of gourmets in thirty-nine states, owe their existence to O'Neill and his play "Strange Interlude."

Perhaps it would be more precise to say that Mr. Johnson's real angel was the capricious censor who suddenly declared that "Strange Interlude" could not be performed in Boston. The Theatre Guild promptly opened the drama in nearby Quincy, and all of Boston trooped out to see it. Before and after the play, or both, the audience, with morals and appetites apparently unimpaired, tried to squeeze into what was then Howard Johnson's only restaurant, and came away singing the praises of his chicken pies and banana splits, along with



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their tributes to Lynn Fontanne and O'Neill. In partial recognition, Johnson has opened one of his nobbiest branches on Route 6 at Orleans, not many miles from the site where the curtain first rose on an O'Neill play. . . .

REGULAR MEALS OR SCHOOLING were no part of Eugene O'Neill's boyhood. His father was the matinee idol James O'Neill, who spent most of his life acting in "The Count of Monte Cristo." Gene was born in the old Cadillac Hotel, on 43rd Street and Broadway, and spent his early years in theatrical boarding houses instead of nurseries and kindergartens. In his one year at Princeton, the legend of his drinking prowess was born, although his exploits in that direction were dwarfed later by the F. Scott Fitzgerald set and relegated, in the words of Croswell Bowen, to "run of the ginmill." Gene insured his precipitate departure from Princeton by hurling a beer bottle through the office window of the division superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad. "They claim now it was Woodrow Wilson's window I broke," he says with some indignation. "That's not true. I had great respect for Mr. Wilson. In fact, he's the last politician I did have respect for." . . .

FROM THE DAY O'NEILL made his mark in the theatre, his primary interest obviously was neither money, fame, nor the approval of Broadway critics and playgoers. He wrote plays because he could not help it. Now, recovered from a long illness and about to move into a new home on the Massachusetts coast, he hopes to continue in the same vein. He never has paid the slightest heed either to the commercial appeal or the length of his dramas. When James Barton complained that one of his speeches in "The Iceman Cometh" was too long, and asked permission to cut it on the opening night, O'Neill warned him grimly, "Leave out one line, and the curtain will never go up for a second performance."

Probably the only critic whose suggestion Eugene O'Neill followed without question was an old Provincetown crony. The day after "The Hairy Ape" opened in New York, his sailor friend wrote him, "I liked the show a lot, Gene, but for God's sake, tell that Number Four stoker to stop leaning his prat against that red-hot furnace." . . .

WELL, ANOTHER VACATION is over, and the next TRADE WINDS column will be written from the old desk at Random House—once the accumulation of bills, solicitations, and whatnot is swept away. And what is the first letter I find there? None other than a heated complaint from Taylor Caldwell about the week ends literary folk enjoy.

"There was a time, ending somewhere in 1942," writes the author of "Melissa," "when it was possible to contact people in the publishing, theatrical, or radio fields in New York at least five days a week. Things were not roaring then, it is true, but at least they were doing very well. Because people were working, and putting all their effort into the work. But how things have changed! Now New York is dead from Thursday afternoon to Tuesday morning. Everyone is passionately engaged in week-ending, and those financially unable to do so think their standing or something will be jeopardized unless they disappear for three or four days a week, ostensibly week-ending also. America wasn't built on two or three days of work a week. It was built on unremitting labor and struggle. You can't do business and lie around beaches and tramp through woods all at the same time. Things won't improve until New York and Hollywood get back to work. Put away the tweeds, the boots, the sports shirts, and bathing suits for a time at least, you boys and gals, or you soon won't have the cash even for mothballs to preserve the evidences of your long week ends. Acquiring a violent tan and a snug bank account at one and the same time is simply impossible."

TRADE WINDS, refreshed and reinvigorated by five full weeks of life on the beaches and in the woods that Miss Caldwell so deplores, is inclined to refer her letter to *The New Yorker*'s "Go Climb a Tree" department. You only live once. You're a helpless old gaffer before you know it. I say: get all the time off you possibly can wangle. Business is one thing. Health and happiness are others. Three cheers for the lazy life!

And here's one last thought, Miss Caldwell: people do not read best-selling novels while they are working. They read them on week ends and vacations.

BENNETT CERF.

"THANK God, Maud," boomed Otis Skinner, "she has no talent." This was after he had seen his daughter, Cornelia Otis Skinner, in her first school play. But the untalented Cornelia has long since belied her father, having starred consecutively on Broadway and authored five best sellers.

Her latest book, FAMILY CIRCLE, had the mark of a popular book on it long before it was published. Virginia Kirkus' Bookshop Service, one of the first straws to blow in the bookstore trade-winds, is a report to bookstores on every book published describing and criticizing it and giving a prediction of sales. It spotted FAMILY CIRCLE at once.

About this girl who had no talent and her latest book, Virginia Kirkus says, "Definitely contagious. Home life, here and abroad, a play of her father's, theatrical history as they lived it, mother's Maud Skinnerisms which were a special kind of spoonerism, father's unfailing sympathy and understanding, and the glamor of his being an actor, where they lived, and how, the places they went and the people they met. An eye for the ludicrous as well as the serious, and a feeling for the touchstone of a happy marriage."

Now FAMILY CIRCLE has been published, and the reviews take up where Virginia Kirkus left off.

Newsweek says, "A lively chronicle, always entertaining and frequently downright funny. Miss Skinner assembles a glittering parade of the theater of the period, spotlighted with gossip of celebrities, intrigues, romances, and feuds."

The *New York Times* says, "Warm and engrossing, as humorous as human. She knows her anecdotes and lets 'em rip. She knows her people and she rips them. But it is all done in affection's cause, and an added honor to a gallant stage name."

And there are many others, all exclamatory and each one begging for more.

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Critics: Cheerleaders or Cranks?

The Theatre

By RICHARD WATTS, Jr.

OF the innumerable charges regularly leveled against newspaper drama critics, to me the most provocative is the contention that they are not properly objective. They are, it is said, too intensely personal in their judgments, too lacking in an ability to render verdicts based on Olympian detachment and austere standards. It is further alleged that they are violent egotists who, instead of contemplating the works of, say, Norman Krasna in the light of Aristotle's laws, habitually air their prejudices, talk about themselves and their personal interests, exercise their phobias, and generally behave as if they were temperamental performers bent on giving a show of their own instead of reviewing the shows of other fellows. The final proof of their degradation is supposed to be that they are perfectly willing to sacrifice truth and justice in the interest of making what used to be known as a wisecrack.

With most of the criticism of critics I find myself in rather embarrassing accord; but this charge seems to me to miss the point completely. For one thing, there hasn't been a metropolitan play reviewer who has known how to make a really devastating wisecrack since the late John Anderson—particularly since George Jean Nathan started writing sentimentally about his dog. My chief reason for objecting to this particular phase of the popular theatrical sport of critic-baiting is not that we seneschals of the drama are too earnest-minded to indulge in an occasional attempt at levity. I object simply because I believe we critics are performing our proper function when we drop any pretense at objectivity and indulge in the most personal kind of comment on the theatre and any other subject.

Any newspaper reviewer who claims that the criticism he writes is objective is not only deceiving his readers but is failing to be helpful to them.

Journalistic critics frequently like to think of themselves as reporters, just like other newspapermen, except that their assignment is to cover the theatre instead of a police beat, Washington, or the United Nations. That they are chiefly reviewers, rather than critics, is certainly true, and there is no denying that one of their primary functions is to provide their readers with a report on what the new show is about, instead of merely expressing an opinion concerning its merits and likelihood of popular success.

But the expression of opinion is also a vital part of the critic's business. A newspaper is, among other things, meant to be read, and there is no escaping the fact that no one pays any attention to the reviewer who doesn't express opinions, and express them pretty vigorously. Even the people professionally concerned with the stage, the very ones who protest most strenuously against the critics' lack of objectivity, refuse to bother with those who are hesitant about saying what they think.

There is, furthermore, a justification for the opinionated critic that is less selfishly pragmatic than that. The reviewer who pretends to an objectivity he cannot possibly possess is being unfair to his readers. I realize that there are certain exact standards in dramatic criticism. For example, certain playwrights such as Shakespeare, Shaw, Chekhov, Ibsen, Sophocles, O'Casey, and O'Neill are, whatever

(*Continued on page* 25)

Art and Music

By ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN

THE editors of *SRL* have posed three questions regarding criticism which they have asked me to answer in the light of my experience as a newspaper reviewer of music and the visual arts. These questions are:

1. What do you feel you and other critics can — and do — accomplish in your work?

2. What problems do you and other critics frequently encounter in your work?

3. How do you, as one critic, go about solving these problems?

These questions and, inevitably, the answers to them, are all bound up with each other. One cannot define what criticism does, or can do, without at the same time defining its problems and suggesting the solutions to such of them as can be solved. Consequently I shall not attempt to handle the three questions in strict succession.

To know what criticism is, or ought to be, one need only ask what the history of art is. The history of art—using the phrase in its broadest sense, to include all the separate arts—is a record of creative personalities moulded by each other and by various circumstances of time and place. The creative personality is paramount; no one writes the history of music in terms of conductors and pianists or the history of painting in terms of dealers. It follows, then, that criticism should be primarily concerned with the creative personalities of the time and place which are of first importance to the critic himself and to his readers—their own.

For a long time past, especially in music and the visual arts, there has been a pronounced lag between the accomplishment of the creative personality and the willingness or ability of the contemporary public to accept his work. It is the function of criticism to close that gap, to speed the process

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his contemporary audience closer and more quickly together.

This places upon the critic the charge of knowing what is going on, and of remaining perennially curious about it. Such perennial curiosity is not easy to maintain, and perhaps no one should be allowed to practise criticism past the age of forty. The trouble is that after fifteen or twenty years in this business, you are not good for anything else. (There are those who would remove the final word from that last sentence.)

All of the foregoing is simple enough. Unfortunately, however, the very same historic development which has brought about the widening gap between the artist and his public has also robbed the critic of all his standards except one, which happens to be the slipperiest and most problematical standard of all.

In a recent article in the *Chicago Review,* Elder Olsen observes that revolt in the arts is always against conventions, never against principles. This is a comforting thought, but it is largely illusory. It may be true, as Olsen points out, that Beethoven's revolt was directed against certain superficial features of eighteenth-century sonata form, but Beethoven did not revolt against tonality. Tonality was, for Beethoven and for all the musicians of his time, a principle; to regard it as anything else robs the very concept of principle of all its meaning. But today we can get along without tonality quite successfully; it is one of several acceptable methods of musical organization. In other words, yesterday's eternal principle is today's convention, and since criticism must inevitably follow along behind creation (but not, one hopes, quite so far behind as public acceptance), the result is that yesterday's criticism, based on yesterday's eternal principles, is likely to be fantastically if not ludicrously wrong.

Wrong in whose terms? The answer to that question contains exactly everything that criticism has to go on today.

The learned critic of the *Journal des Artistes* who wrote that Cézanne's first exhibition, held at Ambroise Vollard's gallery in Paris in 1895, was "a nightmarish apparition of atrocities in oil, eclipsing even legally authorized outrages" thought he was right, and there were thousands of his contemporaries to proclaim him right. Today he is wrong; if he is not wrong, then the whole history of art for the past half-century is a fraud and a farce. He is wrong because experienced and perceptive men came shortly to realize—some of them, in —that Cézanne was a great master, and the experience of the world since 1895 has confirmed their view.

General agreement among the experienced and perceptive, ultimately confirmed on broader levels, is all that contemporary criticism can hope for. This may seem to be the rather desperate, cornered assertion of an intellectually confused era, but actually it isn't, for meaningful criticism has never attained its meaning in any other way.

It follows, then, that criticism is not a science, and the effort to reduce it to a science is one of the wildest and most deplorable aberrations into which the human mind has ever fallen. For science implies objective verification, and esthetic perception cannot be verified objectively. But one must not fall into the hopelessly and meaninglessly relativistic attitude of assuming that esthetic perception cannot be verified at all. It must be verified in terms of general agreement, immediate or ultimate; otherwise mankind is a chaos of private, uncommunicating worlds.

Other problems of criticism and their solutions are largely on technical levels, and some of them really have nothing to do with criticism as such, but with the journalistic aspects of our job.

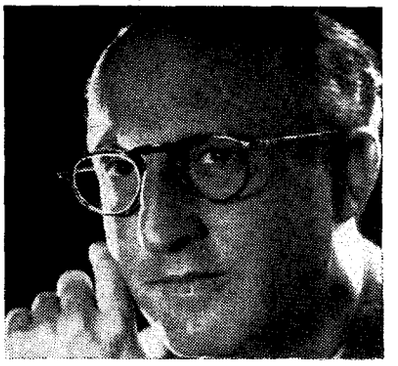
THERE are fashions in criticism, just as there are fashions in art, and fashions in both fields are closely related. Impressionist criticism was the vogue twenty or thirty years ago. The aim was not so much to say whether or not a thing had value as to say what it was like. This was usually done in fancy language; Lawrence Gilman, Paul Rosenfeld, and James Gibbons Huneker were masters of the purple patch. Our generation is much less likely to indulge in polyphonic prose, but we have inherited one thing from the attitude of the older school: we are not likely to take our stand, clean and clear, on questions of value-judgment, and tend to hide our appraisals under the disguise of description or historic placement. Some contemporary critics go so far as to pretend that they make no value-judgments at all, but they do; they can't help themselves.

The worst problem of musical criticism is that most of it has very little to do with music. Ninety-eight per cent of the time we are reviewers of conductors, pianists, and opera singers. Now, performance is an art, and is therefore justly the subject of criticism, but performers and their repertoires don't change a great deal from year to year. Reviewing them the first time is easy. The second time it is not so easy, and by the tenth time you are ready to go out of your mind. In New York this problem is automatically solved by large staffs of critics, who take on the concert artists in rotation and so preserve their sanity, but out in the provinces it is acute and very annoying.

The worst problem of criticism in the visual arts is the group exhibition. Artists have a way of showing their works in packs. They will hang examples of 200 to 1,000 different styles all at once, and you are supposed to say something intelligent about the result.

The solution to that one is simple the first time, but only the first time. "This is Art, 1948," you say, and you proceed to write a review analyzing the trends and tendencies perceptible

(*Continued on page* 33)



My Current Reading

Efrem Kurtz, Russian-born conductor, among other assignments led the New York Philharmonic Orchestra as guest conductor in 1942-43, was musical director of the Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra, and is now music director and permanent conductor of the Houston Symphony Orchestra.

LIFE OF WAGNER *(four volumes), by Ernest Newman (Knopf)*

WAR AND PEACE, *by Liov Nikolaievitch Tolstoy*

A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN, *by Virginia Woolf (Harcourt)*

PEACE OF MIND, *by Joshua Loth Liebman (Simon & Schuster)*

ART OF JUDGING MUSIC, *by Virgil Thomson (Knopf)*

BRENSHAM VILLAGE, *by John Moore (Simon & Schuster)*

A BACKGROUND FOR DOMENICO SCARLATTI, *by Sacheverell Sitwell*

A STUDY OF HISTORY, *by Arnold J. Toynbee (Oxford)*

ESSAYS ON MUSIC, *by Romain Rolland (Allen, Towne & Heath)*

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Fiction. *The addition of another novel of William Faulkner's to his* Tragedie Humane *of the South which he has labored to create for over twenty years marks a red-letter day in American literature. Whether or not "Intruder in the Dust" will win him the wide audience in his own country to which his somber genius entitles him, he is fast becoming in the minds of intellectuals here and abroad America's premier novelist. He is not always easy to read and is difficult to translate, but his exalted place in the minds of European critics is nevertheless secure. When most books of our day have turned into dusty answers to riddles no one cares to solve, Faulkner's absorption in human beings caught, as in other countries, in the ancient patterns of communal guilt and expiation, will be studied and comprehended, as we read and proclaim Dostoievsky today.*

Ex-Aristocrat's Emotional Education

INTRUDER IN THE DUST. By William Faulkner. New York: Random House. 1948. 247 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by MAXWELL GEISMAR

AT the present time William Faulkner is among the three or four leading American novelists. If you count Ernest Hemingway primarily as a short-story writer, and John Dos Passos as a fictional historian of our society, Faulkner almost stands alone in the classic tradition of the novel. And his literary reputation is particularly high at the moment.

But Faulkner's career has been compounded of neglect and sensationalism. He has been harmed by the worship of literary cults and cliques almost as much as by popular ignorance of his work, while his own literary methods have not helped this situation. The best books of his early period, "Light in August" or "The Sound and the Fury," were experimental in form, elaborate or often deliberately obscure in expression. His general reputation was founded on "Sanctuary," a harsh, violent, and essentially superficial flowering of a rich talent. Even today those who admire him most seem largely indifferent to his true quality—or how often he has sacrificed that quality through impatience or rhetoric.

"Intruder in the Dust" is a typical Faulkner novel in this respect. It will probably be attacked by reviewers who are put off, and not without reason, by the obscurity of its language or the intricacy of the novel's structure. At least two men are murdered during the course of the narrative, and another commits suicide. An old Negro named Lucas Beauchamp is held for the first murder and is about to be lynched. But Lucas is the friend and blood relative of some of the old Southern families around Jefferson, Miss. The narrator of the story, a young Southern white boy, is particularly involved with Lucas, whom he sets out to save with the assistance of his uncle Lawyer Gavin Stevens, and a foolhardly Southern spinster called Miss Habersham.

But this is only the beginning of the story, and to those who don't know Faulkner I can hardly suggest its ramifications both in terms of personal relationships or the general social the plot merely provides a framework for the larger symbolism of the novel, and again we see that peculiarly Faulknerian panorama in which Negro and white are bound together by the irony of history, and involved in an inextricable web of shame, guilt, and evil. Lucas's real crime is not the shooting of Vinson Gowrie—of which he is actually innocent, although he refuses to admit his innocence—but the fact that he refuses to admit his inferiority as a Negro. Or rather, being a Negro, he refuses to admit that he is not also a man and, incidentally, of better stock than the Scotch-Irish hill people, who are not McCaslins, not even Edmonds, but just "these new folks."

Unfortunately Vinson Gowrie is one of the Scotch-Irish hill people, and the young narrator of the story is also involved with them. By threatening to lynch an innocent man simply because of the pigmentation of his skin, they threaten his, Chick's, security and honor as a Southerner. As I understand it, and it is not always easy to understand Faulkner's work on a first or second reading, the central theme of "Intruder in the Dust" is actually the emotional education of another young Southern ex-aristocrat through the processes of murder, mob violence, and race hate.

THE AUTHOR: In contrast to the morbid characters who stalk mythical Yocknapatawpha County —set for his symbolic saga of the decayed South —, William Faulkner is known to be "a gentle personality, very quiet, with a fine sense of humor . . . a delightful fellow." Whether Oxford, Miss., where he has clung most of his fifty-one years, shields prototypes of his unhappy cast, physically it resembles the fictional town Jefferson. And its impoverished aristocrats —the "Sartoris" family, about whom he first wrote in 1929,—are his own people. To afford writing at all he had to be postmaster, carpenter, roof painter, and coal-shoveler. He clerked, briefly, miserably, in a New York book store, sampled artists' life in New Orleans (novelized in "Mosquitoes") and, in 1925, toured Europe by foot. Discouraged that his early books—"Soldier's Pay" and "The Sound and the Fury"—were no bonanzas, he coldly wrote one that was—the sensational "Sanctuary." Of his seventeen volumes it still supports its share of the 100-year-old Colonial house where he, his wife, and daughter Jill live, surrounded by dogs, cats, horses, cows, and hogs, cotton fields, and a retinue of Negroes. He shrugs off what people think of his other works, among them, "As I Lay Dying," "Pylon," "Absalom, Absalom!," "The Unvanquished," "The Wild Palms," "The Hamlet," and "Go Down, Moses." He never reads reviews. For three years he has been writing a fable of the period between the Crucifixion and Resurrection. Since World War I, when he was with the RAF (some say because he wouldn't join any damyankees), aviation has been a major interest, along with farming. His refusal to confide in reporters has provoked fabulous tales—notably concerning his eccentricities in Hollywood years ago and way with a bottle. (Friends maintain he merely holds his own in a corn-whisky *klatsch.*) "Because I write doesn't make what I eat for breakfast or think of the international situation a matters of news or public concern," he says rather too modestly. —R. G.

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The trouble is that this central theme is all too familiar in Faulkner's work, and it is now presented in a diluted and popularized form. The boy Chick, his worried mother, philosophical uncle, and shadowy father are reflections of earlier and better Faulkner characters. Lucas Beauchamp is a far more interesting and memorable personage than the white folks of the novel, but one notices also that his main role is apparently to endure and to survive, while some Southern Negroes may want to do a little more than this, and some have to be content with less.

"Intruder in the Dust" is really a Gothic romance in the best Southern style with stage props and literary puppets instead of people and events, and the language, which conceals so much else, fails to conceal this. It is still superior to the average novel but it is far inferior to the work of Faulkner at his best. One might say that even Jefferson, Miss., the center of Faulkner's Deep Southern cosmos, has come under the influence of Hollywood, while the more explicit philosophy of the novel also reflects a distorted but none the less sentimental and romanticized expression of a familiar Southern chauvinism.

It would be a curious climax to Faulkner's career if the great Southern literary rebel and realist of the early 1930's should become, in his own polar and tortuous fashion, the Thomas Nelson Page of the 1940's. But a serious writer is entitled to his own license and luxury, and we can still afford to wait for the best of Faulkner.

"Moses" and the Underground Railway

A CLOUDED STAR. By Anne Parrish. New York: Harper & Bros. 1948. 242 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by JOHN WOODBURN

IN 1913, in Auburn, N. Y., a magnificent, valorous old woman died, ninety-two years after she had been born in slavery on a Maryland plantation. Her name was Harriet Tubman, although for more than a decade before the Civil War, the years in which she led 300 slaves in cunning, nightbird flight along the Underground Railway to safety in Canada, no Southern Negro spoke that name. On the plantations of Maryland and Virginia black men and women, dreaming of freedom, whispered the secret, symbolic word "Moses" and listened on moonless nights for the sound of a whip-poor-will calling near water, the signal that she had come. By 1860 the exasperated slave-owners of the Eastern Shore had put a bitter price upon her head: "Harriet, very dark, short, and stout-built, speaks deep and has scar on the left temple. For her capture, $80,000." From Boston to Richmond, by toll-bridge and turnpike and in country lanes, greedy men watched for the little black woman, and always she stole past them, following the North Star to Niagara with her trembling runaways, and slipping back South alone, like a drifting shadow, to utter her mournful bird-call beside the rivers. A friend and adviser of the blazing John Brown, she served as a spy and as a nurse with the Union Army during the war, and was later a welcome guest in the homes of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Bronson Alcott. Forty-six years after Lee's surrender a drowsy government awarded her a small pension and in Auburn, at her death, she became the first and only woman of her race to be buried with full military honors.

A small literature has grown around this remarkable woman in recent years; there is at least one biography, "Harriet, the Moses of Her People," by Sarah Bradford, and both "The Railroad to Freedom," by Hildegarde Hoyt Swift, and Henrietta Buckmaster's excellent "Let My People Go" have touched inevitably upon her life. Now Anne Parrish, mingling imagination with recorded fact and with the stories that her great-aunt, who knew Harriet, told Miss Parrish when she was a child, has written "A Clouded Star," a brief, beautiful, and lyric evocation of what might have been one of Harriet Tubman's northward journeys in the last year before the war.

The story begins simply: "Small Mingo was nine years old when he ran away from the plantation called 'Tranquility,' and when he returned he was ninety-five." There was nothing left of the graceful plantation-house but the inheriting weeds and wild flowers when Samuel came back; there was a colored woman who was the granddaughter of another little slave boy whom Samuel had played with when they had both belonged to Mr. Harry Tracey. But back in the overseer's house he found Miss Amanda. That summer Samuel had run away Miss Amanda had come to visit her cousins in Maryland, down from Boston, where her mother had married a Yankee abolitionist. With the passionate chauvinism of the child away from home and in a strange environment, ten-year-old Amanda had hated seeing slavery all about her, had given Samuel the only frank friendship from a white person he had ever known. It was adventurous, romantic little Amanda who had urged him to slip down the river in the misty dawn, to follow the call of a whip-poor-will which would lead him to freedom. That had all been eighty-six years before; now Miss Amanda, sitting on the porch of the overseer's house, looking out over the delicate wild ruin of "Tranquility," asked Samuel Mingo to tell her of that northward journey. Somehow, running blindly through the nights and hiding in the enemy daylight, he found the woman called

"Lonesome Road," by Thomas Benton.

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Moses. With her were eight others: Big Joe, with a branded forehead, Jacob, and the dandified Dace, who spoke French and aped the finicking ways of his master; Dora, Dace's wife, the creamy-skinned Linda, two tiny babies, and the little girl Dee. From Maryland, through Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York State to the border, the stubborn, instinctual, heroic little woman got them to Canada. Sometimes it took wisdom, often courage, and once, with Dace, it took the long-barreled gun she kept always by her hand. There were dawns of wild, fresh beauty, when white herons rose before them as they walked, when the wild grapes were sweetened by hunger, and freedom seemed certain as sunrise; and there were nights filled with fear and near-capture, when only Harriet's ferocity and animal courage saved them. At Wilmington and Philadelphia, and in New York were the Quakers, serene, ingenious friends who gave them food and transportation at times they could not have made their way alone.

If there are some who will contend that such characters as Mr. Harry Tracey and Miss Pamellia, Mr. Charlie Tobe and Miss Amanda are traditionally romantic, it should be remembered that this is a little the way they were, that sort of people at that time, if only that they lived, deliberately, according to a romantic pattern, and certainly, to a little Negro slave in 1860, they must have seemed truly the gods and goddesses they so steadily imagined themselves. It cannot be denied that there was magnolia then in the South, as there is today. And if Harriet seems heroic beyond the ordinary woman—she was, and there is the plain factual record to prove it.

For my part, I found this a memorable book about an unforgettable woman, a book which left me moved and admiring, caught up in Miss Parrish's tranquil but strongly-lighted prose. "A Clouded Star" has the stately swing, the mournful sweetness of a country ballad, enclosing an old story in the simple, elliptical framework of a song.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 756)

WALT WHITMAN:
SHUT NOT YOUR DOORS

Shut not your doors to me, proud libraries,
For that which was lacking on all your well-filled shelves, yet needed most, I bring,
Forth from the war emerging, a book I have made,
The words of my book nothing, the drift of it everything.

Paris in the Spring of 1944

PLAYING FOR KEEPS. By Roger Vailland. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1948. 271 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by RICHARD MCLAUGHLIN

IT takes a cynical French novelist like Roger Vailland to remind us that we are still a land of perplexed puritans. Trenchant, audacious, enlivened by a typically Gallic irreverence for genteel morality, Vailland's prose has about as much emotional warmth as a Frigidaire. Still, intellectually, "Playing for Keeps" is one of the most provocative novels to come out of the French Resistance, and makes our own hardboiled novels appear tame or infantile by comparison.

Vailland's inquisitive pen does not stop with eroticism and the casual lecheries of the libertine as symbolized in his hero, Marat, but takes in the very ethic of the Resistance itself, exploring the mind of the revolutionary, his social obligations, the choice he must make between thought and action, liberty and discipline. And since Marat is the introspective type, we are assured from the start that both his vices and his virtues will be held up to the same cold intellectual self-scrutiny. It goes without saying that all of this makes stimulating, even breezy reading fare.

Vailland's cold-blooded, critical detachment can work against the general reading appeal of his thriller, too. For whether his characters are trying to elude the Gestapo or maneuver their way into some boudoir or parlor game, they seldom, if ever, arouse our sympathy. And yet Vailland manages effectively to recapture the spirit of Paris in the spring of 1944—the streets and famous landmarks, a little shabbier than prewar days; the black-market night clubs and restaurants; rue Pigalle with its tawdry diversions; those thoroughfares where even the grime of war cannot entirely shut out their elegance. Before we have finished reading his novel, we have learned not only how many diverse forces went to make up the French underground movement but have discovered how one common sentiment, the will to resist at all costs, welded heroes and mercenaries, men of feeling and cynics, nationalists and Communists, together in a common effort under De Gaulle.

The novel covers five scattered but representative days in the lives of a group of intellectuals working underground in a De Gaullist military organization. The action—what little there is of it, since most of M. Vailland's intellectuals are given to lengthy monologues when they are not participating in dialectical debates—is seen through the eyes of Marat, who, at thirty-six, cannot help but view the antics of his fellow conspirators somewhat sourly at times, since they are much younger than he is and appear to be discovering only in March 1944, in the middle of the battle, the problems which were familiar to his generation twenty years earlier.

Marat, the spectator, "the solitary stroller," is very much in evidence throughout:

> . . . I come from a middle-class family. I am fighting as hard as I know how against my class, but I have inherited its vices, and I love its luxury and its pleasures. Many things which the militant Communist does not even suspect play a large part in my life. . . . But even with comrades to the right of me and comrades to left, I shall plow a lonely furrow. There are men born out of due season, either too soon or too late. . . .

Here lies the pathos of Vailland's tough little saga of the Resistance. Marat's cynicism, and still more, his hedonism, cannot ever bridge the gap between him and these young crusaders. This tense drama of life and death is like a romantic game to Caracalla, the nationalist, Rodrique and Frédéric, the Communists, to Chloe, the former fashion model, and Annie, Frédéric's lovely young fiancée. Only Marat and his faded ex-playmate Mathilde (whom he taught how to smoke opium, who introduced her own refinements—a shot of cocaine to complete the desired effect) know they are all "playing for keeps." Mathilde seeks by every means to save her life—shady black-market deals, collaboration, and finally betrayal of her friends; whereas Marat, realizing that "death is the common fate of all men and not to be avoided," as Xenophon reminded the Ten Thousand, undergoes the ordeal of secret missions, always on the alert to the peril of being delivered into enemy hands.

But it is not all quite as simple as that for Marat. He is a bit of a heel, and his sensual pleasures play an all-too-important role in his life. We are somehow left with the somber feeling that Marat's personal drama is pure Greek tragedy. The Resistance is only postponing the grim finale a while longer. Doses of ortedrine and gardenal, and an occasional seduction, even if it happens to be the fiancée of a fellow Resistance worker, enable Marat to retain lucidity long enough for him to include himself among the men who will not resign themselves to the misery of the human race.

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Temporal Paradox

LONG AFTER SUMMER. By Robert Nathan. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1948. 146 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by BRADFORD SMITH

HERE is another of Robert Nathan's porcelain miniatures, fashioned with the quiet perfection, the tenuousness of plot, and sure evocation of atmosphere which have become his hallmark.

Mr. Nathan has his own artistic economy. It operates on a small budget of words — there are scarcely 30,000 in this book—on a meager plot, and on characters seen in flashes of light rather than in solid detail. Mr. Nathan dispenses with analysis of character and complication of plot. Primarily an impressionist, he concentrates his effects in a situation.

The story of "Long After Summer" is so uninvolved that it may be told in a sentence. Johanna, a fourteen-year-old girl from an orphanage, comes to a Cape Cod village where she does housework for the narrator of the story and falls in love with a lad who is soon drowned in a storm. How she begins to act as if time was moving backwards in order to relive the brief months of her happiness with young Jot, and how her loss is repaired, complete the story.

In his earlier books Robert Nathan has several times concerned himself with the matter which interests him here—the tyranny of time, the seeming transcience and real eternity of youth. Even the titles — "One More Spring," "Winter in April," and the present one—reveal his preoccupation with this temporal paradox. Johanna's journey into the backward of time and the narrator's feeling for Johanna are counterparts of the same thing. Johanna's loss is compensated in the narrator's recovery of his youth through Johanna.

That a man of forty should fall in love with a girl just reaching maturity is a possible though unusual situation, but it does require an acceptance by the reader of an oversimplified theory of human relations. At least the relationship is oversimplified here. Yet Mr. Nathan does his work so skilfully that the difficulty is well masked.

As a craftsman, Mr. Nathan is a delight. Sensitive to the rhythms of the spoken word and to nature, he knows how to carry them into his story with a skill that seems effortless. Mature and sophisticated, he manages to convey the appearance of a direct and disarming simplicity. In a period when most novelists are scarcely content with 600 or 1,000 pages, he prefers to weigh his words rather than number them—a virtue which deserves to be encouraged. He sets his limits close—a few characters, seen as an outsider sees them rather than from within, events that for the most part are quiet rather than dramatic. Out of these slender materials he makes something which, though slight, has distinction and charm. His considerable following will find in "Long After Summer" the qualities they admired in his earlier stories.

To find all this in so short a book —a sensitive style, a clear rendering of nature, a quietly appealing story, and a sure creation of atmosphere—is perhaps enough. Yet there is a softness at the core of the story which prevents the work as a whole from rising to the level of Mr. Nathan's technical achievement. The difficulty springs from the relationship between Johanna and her employer who becomes first a pseudo-father, then a lover. No doubt unconsciously, Mr. Nathan is presenting a father-daughter relationship generally regarded as unacceptable. He has to gloss it over. He has to justify it to the reader. And he does. Perhaps the ability to make the illicit "nice" is one of the secrets of Mr. Nathan's success. Yet a certain haziness results, though so skilfully handled that the reader may be only half aware of it.

Meanwhile he will have fallen under Mr. Nathan's spell, with its unique blend of calculated simplicity, restrained warmth, and quiet charm. Robert Nathan has not let his followers down.

Mary Renault—"as relentless as if she were following the trail of a hunted fox."

Neuroses as Villains

NORTH FACE. By Mary Renault. New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc. 1948. 280 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

MARY RENAULT is a highly intuitive Englishwoman who writes simple, lyrical prose, and whose portrait of the mental digressions of her characters in the course of a love affair can be as relentless as if she were following the trail of a hunted fox. That so sensitive a novelist should have been crowned last year by the massive and glittering MGM prize was something to wonder at, for "Return to Night" was concerned with extremely complex people in the throes of what Victorian novelists used to call "the tender passion," whose emotions were apparently so difficult to reveal on the screen that the picture is not likely ever to be produced.

"North Face" follows the same pattern. The novel is as English to the core as the wooded and mountainous North Devon country in which the story is shrouded, so much so that it is difficult for an American reader to become interested at first in the inhabitants of the seaside guest house where Neil Langton goes to reflect on his ravished past. The impoverished hostess, the sturdy and sensible nurse, and the virginal lady don who are taking their holidays by the seaside cliffs are so completely reticent and awkward with each other that they resemble large insects exploring each other fearfully with their antennae, rather than the hearty and gregarious human beings Americans are accustomed to meet trying to make the best of their vacations.

The not-quite-middle-aged teacher and mountain climber, who after the war had invaded this female retreat to lick the wounds inflicted by his too amorous wife, who has been aided by several American officers, wanted only to be let alone. When shy Ellen Shortland arrived with a young man who was obviously not her husband, nobody wanted her around, including Neil. But one day after he saved her from breaking her neck on a mountain slope she had no business to try to climb, he discovered that in many ways this fragile creature was in a worse plight than he was, though Neil had seen his small daughter burned to death while his wife was carrying on upstairs with her latest lover. Since the story itself is deeply concerned both with his own mental distress and with her neurotic attachment to a flier who had been shot down in the Channel during the war, it is hardly fair to reveal that, against logic or

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reason, she had felt that her love was incestuous. After Neil made love to her, the incestuous chain was finally broken.

This rapid summary does not do justice to the subtleties in the relationship of these people with each other. As characters, both the forthright nurse and the woman teacher, who hides from her mind the grosser aspects of life, are as fully drawn as Neil and his Ellen. They are both admirable human beings, in their different ways, and their frustrations, since marriage and sex have passed them by, are as appealing to the reader's sympathy as the more tempestuous passions of the lovers. This kind of psychological novel, however poetically and sensitively written, inevitably contains some of the grosser aspects of the common mystery story. The villains are the neuroses hiding in the depths of the minds of hero and heroine, to be tracked down and put away safely in a cell like so many criminals. In real life they might eventually escape, larger and more menacing than ever. A part of Miss Renault's art is to convince the reader that there is only happiness in store for her tortured lovers.

Monarchical Agonies

CHILDREN OF THEIR TIME. By F. C. Weiskopf. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1948. 253 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HAL LEHRMAN

THE author of this novel, a Czech poet, essayist, novelist, and translator who has lived in this country since 1939, continues in the present book "the thread of a series of novels" which commenced with "Twilight On the Danube" and will span the years 1913-1939. His panorama of Prague, Vienna, and Geneva in the middle years of World War I is crowded with as intricately unsavory a bevy of characters as you are likely ever to encounter outside the covers of jumbo historical novels, which average three times the thickness of Mr. Weiskopf's compact offering. He has manufactured, among others, a *grande dame* of the vanishing Hapsburg regime whose heroically patrician performance at the funeral of a beloved brother, after three days of careful rehearsal, is washed out by rain; her nephew, a scheming dunderhead of a professor who happily declaims original patriotic odes to his fallen soldier-son only to learn with mortification that the uncooperative boy is merely a prisoner of war; her niece, who abandons one fiancé, a Hungarian

(*Continued on page* 34)

The World. *During the last year the Russian crisis and the war for Palestine have monopolized the headlines. It is astonishing, therefore, to find that very few major books on either have appeared this year. The early months of 1948 saw Fritz Sternberg's "How to Stop the Russians—Without War," Sir John Maynard's "Russia in Flux," Edward Crankshaw's "Russia and the Russians"—but there has been little since. All the more welcome, therefore, is "As We See Russia," as well as George Fielding Eliot's "quickie" about Palestine and the Near East (both reviewed here). . . . Since England's position in the cold war is both puzzling and crucial, a book by Barbara Ward of the* Economist *(reviewed below) will also be of timely interest. The brilliant* Economist *has in the last few years become Britain's most influential journal of public affairs.*

Objectively, the USSR

AS WE SEE RUSSIA. By Members of the Overseas Press Club of America. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1948. 316 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by HENRY B. KRANZ

THIS is more than just another book about the Soviet Union. It intends to give a balanced and realistically objective picture of the USSR, not as seen with the eyes of one observer but of twenty-five men and women, capable American reporters who either have lived some months or years in Soviet Russia (not in Siberia), or at least have had ample opportunity to come into contact with Russians in countries now controlled by Moscow. Is this time enough? Tracey Phillips realizes that even one year is not anything like the length of time needed to say "I have been to Russia." And this reviewer, who has spent five years in Russia and Siberia, would be the first to agree with her. On the other hand, the composite impact of the observations of so many experienced interpreters of world events gives as good an idea of conditions, peoples, and ideas in the Soviet Union now and twenty-five years ago, as perhaps any book written by someone who has lived there for more than a decade.

Varied as are the angles from which the authors of this many-colored symposium view the decision with which America is faced today, they all have this in common: they reject appeasement. Some hope that in time equilibrium between the East and the West may be established, because "people are people everywhere," and all that Russian men and women want is peace, a little security, and a chance to live their own lives (Leland Stowe, Emil Lengyel, George Moorad, Bill Downs, Sonia Tomara); but it is also agreed that "you can't do business with Stalin" (Josef Israels II). The USSR has been enriched at the expense of its "brotherly neighbors in the Balkans" (Hal Lehrman); what Soviet Russia has done to Bulgaria is an object lesson in what it is trying to do to the world (Reuben H. Markham); the success of Russian imperialism in the Far East is due to America's failure in China (Harold R. Isaacs); the rulers in the Kremlin have monopolized the mind of the Russian people with the purpose of creating a sense of fear and hostility towards all Western countries (Joseph B. Phillips); and that is why former comrades-in-arms are now enemies (Leo Glassman).

Neither do Russian newspapermen understand individual freedom (Ralph McGill), nor do Russian schools try to indoctrinate the children with other ideas than militarism (Edith W. Thompson). That the American people often have distorted ideas about economic conditions in Soviet Russia is pointed out by John F. Chapman, who writes that because of the management system in the USSR, which is built around incentives, American industry comes much closer to "equal pay for all" than that of the Russians. The system of incentives, clearly in contrast with early Bolshevik theories, is also prevalent on Russian farms (John Strohm), just as in the years between 1928 and 1934 Leninist-Communism has changed to Stalinist-totalitarian dictatorship, with the result that ideas of equality were soon ridiculed (Eugene Lyons). But after the last war there was a time when the Russian people could have become friends of America. The country was surrounded by allies, and there was, therefore, no use for a war industry or for the security empire of the

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NKVD. Stalin, however, was afraid that this would mean the end of Marxism-Stalinism, of the *apparat,* of internationalism in favor of nationalism. Convinced that conflicts in the USA would soon dominate the scene, that strikes and unemployment there would lead to grave financial crises, he ordered the return to orthodoxy (Richard C. Hottelet).

In a final chapter Craig Thompson vigorously attacks those Americans who still think that the first loyalty of U.S. Communists, as of all Communists everywhere, is not to Moscow, and who do not know that the Russian campaign against America has been going on for years. (This reviewer was listening to Russian short-wave stations immediately after the outbreak of the war in 1939 and cannot forget their wild attacks against American democracy.) Thompson also denies that the Jewish problem in Russia has been solved, as William Zuckerman in one of the earlier chapters had affirmed.

Henry Cassidy tells us that in 1946, when the Cominform was established, the question was: "Would this lead to war?" The Russians—while building up the world's most powerful army (Larry Lesueur)—said at that time: "The forces attached to peace are so great and so powerful that it would be enough for them to show tenacity and firmness in the struggles for the defense of peace for the plans of the aggressors to undergo a complete fiasco." Henry Cassidy adds — something which all writers might have said: "The Western World, with a different identity for the aggressors in mind, might well subscribe to that manifesto."

A timely book of this sort needs no special recommendation today. Some of the pieces are chatty, but all are highly informative. The story of Max, the nasty-dangerous Intourist guide (Paul Lecler) is very amusing, and Oriana Atkinson adds a lyrical note when she speaks about melancholy, exotic, solemn, and ancient Moscow, which she hates to think she may never see again. If anything is missing it is a chapter about the Russians in Germany, and one about Stalin and the men in the Kremlin, the rulers of those two hundred million little people who apparently do not all talk like pages out of *Pravda* but seem more or less willing to believe what they are told: that theirs is the future.

Henry B. Kranz, former Austrian author and critic, is with the Department of the Army as editorial and information specialist working on the German and Austrian reorientation programs of the American occupations.

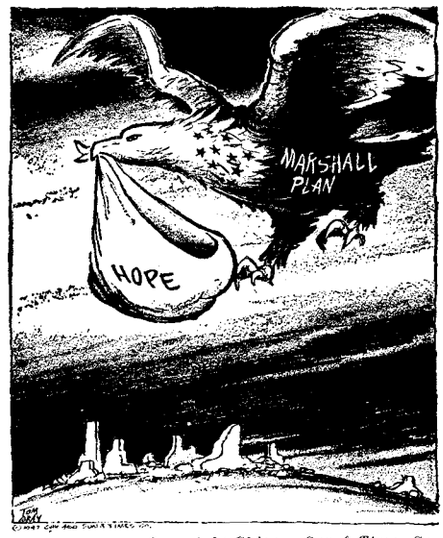
Which Way Is Forward?

THE WEST AT BAY. By Barbara Ward. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1948. 288 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by ASHER BRYNES

THE great debate over the Marshall Plan has passed into the limbo of the *Times* index and the "Encyclopedia Britannica" yearbook, but there are worse struggles to come. Will the next Congress vote the second appropriation? There may be a Republican Administration at that time, and if so it will open the record of the initial workings of Secretary Marshall's Plan in his absence. The consequence may be a reduction of future allocations to the level of bare relief. As an editorial writer for England's most influential economic review (the London *Economist*) Barbara Ward faces up to this possibility in a spirit of moderation and restraint. However, she is sufficiently familiar with the ways of American politicians to be alarmed—and the note of urgency keeps breaking through.

It comes out in the title (Miss Ward really means Western Europe, not the United States, is at bay) and in the text: "America is now the old world and Europe must learn to be a new world or perish." Occasionally her mood falls into something like despair. "For this time, it seems, all the pillars have fallen. The last ray of the old sun has been extinguished and if we of the Western World can do nothing but look backwards, then *we are for the dark."* The American reader who wants to know which way is forward will find one version in this book. I do not think he will be convinced, however, if he has a reasonable knowledge of economics and history.



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"Rebirth of Sixteen Nations."

Forward, says Miss Ward, means the aim to reestablish stability and prosperity in Europe. The best way to do this is to turn back to the causes of the failure of the old order. It failed because of a political reason: the balance of power vanished and left a vacuum behind. It failed because of an economic reason: Europe's industrial organization was insufficiently modern to meet the competition of the United States. It failed because of a social reason: Western industrial society could not master the problem of "ingrafting the new industrial masses into a coherent social order and the economic problem present in the fluctuations of the trade cycle."

Obviously, the difficulty does not lie in Miss Ward's idea of unification. The only people who object to it are the agents and followers of the international Communist movement. It is acceptable to every other group on the face of the earth. It is the one line of agreement which cuts across the distinction between old world and new world and makes a possibility of the restoration of One World — the One World of free human traffic through all countries with the exception of Russia—which existed a generation ago. What is profoundly disturbing about Miss Ward's approach is the negative character of her analysis and, as a result, the backwardness of her proposals for the realization of Western union.

Why was Europe formerly stable and prosperous? Why — to take the particular case which is fundamental to this inquiry — did the Industrial Revolution appear first in England and, as Miss Ward notes, evolve only in England for a full forty years? Why did the great *laissez faire* revolutions in France and America occur toward the end of that period? Why were the nations at peace during the ensuing century of free competition? Why, nevertheless, did England absolutely, and the Continental powers of Europe relatively, lose their head start to America? Is there any connection between the effort to arrest economic decline by state action, or to substitute state competition for private competition, and the thundering outburst of two world wars in this century? Miss Ward sets a great deal of history in motion but she manages to march, triumphantly, around these questions.

The explanation of this performance is that Miss Ward wants to have everything fixed at once. She believes that political, economic, and social problems ought to be solved simultane-

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ously, and since the only agency with enough authority to make a total job of it is the state, she appeals for state action. Her recipe for the cure of Europe is a hair of the dog that bit her country and its neighbors. Meanwhile, we are dragged in because such a total solution requires goods and dollars—not goods alone but also a freely circulating medium of exchange—from the United States. A curious light is thrown upon this European predicament by the fact that Belgium, the only war-torn nation which promptly restored a free economy and now is in production and actually has a surplus of goods to sell, needs dollars as much as the rest because European currencies are not freely negotiable in Europe!

Again and again Miss Ward returns to America's war-production record to argue that we can afford the demands made upon us. "Between 1939 and 1944 the United States' economy doubled. The national income which was running at the level of some 90 billions in 1939, had reached 180 billions by 1944." And farther along she remarks that "all the plans for capital development of all the big [U.S.] companies put together would hardly have doubled the economy in so short a time. Could it be that a completely unregulated system was beginning to be incapable of expanding production to the real economic limit of the country's capacity?" That final query is indeed the sixty-four-dollar question.

But suppose we take a critical look at those figures. Actually the increase in physical output between 1939-1944 was on the order of fifty per cent for gross national product, and fifty-two per cent for national income, but even the corrected statistics boil down, simply, to a more realistic guess than Miss Ward's. There is no way of further discounting the rise in price that, in the days of OPA, took the form of deliberately cheapening quality or switching poor merchandise into higher price brackets by changes in design, etc. Nor have we any norm for measuring the real (*i.e.*, 1939) value of novel war devices first manufactured with marginal labor, say, in 1944.

What we can do with considerable precision is to calculate the excess of consumption needs over cash demands here at the present time. It is about three times the amount of money we are giving away through the Marshall Plan. In other words we are some 15 billions short of an adequate national income and yet we are donating another five billion dollars to bale out Europe. Isn't there anybody around to say a good word for free enterprise?

The Troubles in Palestine

HATE, HOPE, AND HIGH EXPLOSIVES. A Report on the Middle East. By George Fielding Eliot. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1948. 284 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by MARTIN EBON

GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT, the military writer, made a two months' trip through the Middle East last spring, and now he has wrapped it up in a lively, chatty, and informative book. Most of it is concerned with Palestine, and it makes a good antidote to the daily dose of hopped-up news dispatches presented by a large part of the press.

Eliot talked with Zionist, British, and Arab commanders. He observed troops wherever he could, and he watched some action during the battle for Jerusalem. He has a high opinion of the enthusiasm and staff work behind the Israeli Army, Haganah. He is certain that early Arab claims in no way indicated true strength or fighting power.

It is refreshing to read a book dealing with fighting in Palestine that deals calmly with Great Britain's position. Both Arab and Zionist spokesmen pulled out all stops when it came to criticizing the British for a perfidiousness which proved largely imaginary. Particularly interesting is Eliot's account of his interview with Glubb Pasha, the private British commander of Transjordan's Arab Legion. Glubb called the then projected push of the Arab Legion into Palestine "damn foolishness." When Eliot insisted that it looked very much as if King Abdullah's armies would nevertheless invade Palestine, this conversation followed:

"It ought not to happen at all," Glubb went on. "Too risky."

"The Legion wouldn't be fighting alone, sir. There are the other Arab states," Eliot suggested, to draw him out.

Glubb gave him a look of withering scorn. "Understand you've seen all the other Arab armies," he barked. "You think they're going to do any serious fighting?"

"No, sir," Eliot admitted. "I don't."

"Then why should we stick our silly necks out?"

This sounds very different from the Zionist version that Glubb Pasha is somehow the tool of a very long-range and very devious British policy, designed to assure an indirect hold over Palestine by way of Transjordan.

Eliot writes a short but informative chapter on Iran. He gives a convincing and discouraging picture of graft and corruption in the Iranian Army, a century-old practice which the American military missions are trying to stop. He isn't at all sure that the Iranian Army would stand up and resist a Russian invasion force.

Eliot traveled fast, and covered a lot of ground during a very short time. When he writes about Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, he concentrates on the role which these Arab nations play in the Palestine fighting. The main and most informative parts of the book are therefore concerned with Palestine. His visit to Iran and his brief trips to Turkey and Greece were made in much of a hurry. His Turkish impressions are nice and gossipy, like the letter of a tourist friend with good connections. I found his account of a four-day junket to Greece superficial to the point of irresponsibility—possibly because I have just come back from a more extensive stay in that country, and am therefore particularly annoyed with snap judgments. But, as an old hand at military writing, Eliot should have stayed away from such sweeping prophecies as these: "Markos [chief of the Communist guerrillas] is, for all practical purposes, 'finished,' and the people of Greece will soon have a chance to try to rebuild, in reasonable security, their shattered homes and lives."

Well, it just isn't so. Markos's troops are moving back into Greece, after having temporarily been pushed into Albania. New attacks are being made in the Peloponnese. Eliot must know that the Germans, with very much stronger forces than the present Greek Government, were unable to crush partisan warfare. Only if the Greek borders to the north are sealed, or if the Tito-Cominform rift should end all support for Markos, can he be "finished."

Eliot's reports and comments related to Palestine provide lively and fair background to the day-to-day news. For that alone, this is a worthwhile book.

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Personal History. *We review below the autobiography of Francis Toye, a British music critic of the same generation as the Sitwells and Virginia Woolf. Polished craftsmen, erudite, witty, eminently civilized but perhaps a bit effete, the writers in this group are still, in part, with us today. The Sitwells continue to publish—Sir Osbert's latest volume, "Laughter in the Next Room," will appear next month. Virginia Woolf's last book, "The Moment and Other Essays," was published posthumously earlier this year. But the roots of these writers were in the culminating days of England's glory in the last century. And they were born only seventy-odd years after the death of Richard Brinsley Sheridan (see a new biography reviewed below), parliamentarian and author of "The Rivals," who lived through the lusty eighteenth-century years of England's growth into a world power.*

A Great Borrower

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN: His Life and His Theatre. By Lewis Gibbs. New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc. 1948. 280 *pp.* $4.

Reviewed by FRANCIS MASON, JR.

A FRESH and comprehensive life of so elusive a figure as Richard Brinsley Sheridan would be welcome in any age. Sheridan has had no biographer who was sufficiently disinterested to be thoroughly interested in the fact that he was politician as well as playwright. But this new biography is more impressive than the proverbial timely and much-needed book. Just as some years ago Joseph Wood Krutch's biography of Johnson served as considerably more than an assembly of the latest data, so also has Lewis Gibbs now served Sheridan.

Conspicuous eighteenth-century figure that he was, Sheridan cannot, of course, involve or interest us as Johnson does. Neither wrote vast quantities of work because of the business of their lives, but Sheridan's handful of plays is all that we have in literature to admire him for. Perhaps this is because we have lost his conversation, which some of his own time admired, and his speeches, which could not be adequately recorded. Had they been great, however, they might not have been lost. Sheridan, as Lamb remarked, was a great borrower. Johnson was a great original.

What Johnson wrote we can at all times connect with his life; what Sheridan wrote had little to do with his. This is not for want of evidence. Mr. Gibbs has brought all the evidence together.

Before he was thirty, Sheridan had written the plays for which we principally know him and upon which his fame rests. From the first night of "The Rivals" to the first night of "The Critic" there was less than five years. His career in Parliament lasted thirty-two years.

Mr. Gibbs begins at the end. Sheridan's funeral in Westminster Abbey was attended not by people of the theatre, not by literary men, but by peers and politicians. He was buried in Poet's Corner and would not have been buried in the Abbey at all on the strength of his statesmanship.

This biography of Sheridan and all speculation about him must thus begin with questions of *why*. Why did Sheridan abandon the theatre for Parliament when he never seemed ambitious for fame as a statesman? Mr. Gibbs does not give a sure answer, yet the answer is contained in his book.

"Sheridan was an actor who liked best to write for himself, a playwright who was his own hero."

It is true that Sheridan wished to overcome the disadvantages of his birth and his poverty, true that he wished to be a world success and that in Parliament he could achieve a degree of respectability and prestige uncommon to the theatre. As manager of Drury Lane he could make enough money to afford politics and play two games at once. But towards the end of his life Sheridan's respectability did not increase; he became "Poor Sheridan" and a problem to his friends. If he had counted on nothing else but the fame the major portion of his life seems to have been spent in pursuing, he would not have permitted himself this disintegration.

Sheridan's writing in the theatre is very close to his writing in Parliament. Both are witty, choice, and moral according to the age. And Sheridan wrote for actors with complete awareness and appreciation of their art. He wrote for them, as Shaw has said, as Handel wrote for singers. Much as he must have admired his own plays and other actors' performances in them, Sheridan was an actor himself and his father had been one before him. Gibbon remarked what a great actor Sheridan was after listening to his four-day speech against Warren Hastings.

Thomas Sheridan was called second only to Garrick. His son, in Parliament, was second only to Fox, to Burke, and to Pitt. He was an actor who liked best to write for himself, a playwright who was his own hero.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 275

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 275 will be found in the next issue.

ABCD EFGZYXG

WKYEDBLPB FH MFOB

EFGZYXG DFPZG.

G. MXDDBO

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 274

Progress is nothing but the victory of laughter over dogma.

BENJAMIN DECASSERES.

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Tired Citizen of the World

HAROLD BAUER, HIS BOOK. By Harold Bauer. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1948. 306 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by JAMES LYONS

THESE memoirs remind us once again that the day of the flamboyant, long-maned virtuoso is past. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Harold Bauer preferred not to be billed as "The Greatest Living Pianist." Recital-goers will remember him as "The Master Pianist," or, more modestly, without the emphasis of the definite article. Credit for this comparatively unassuming catch-phrase he gives to Henry Mason, one of Boston's better music critics some years ago. This is about the kindest word spoken for the critical fraternity in the entire book.

Mr. Bauer's tone, for all its mellowness, is that of a tired citizen of the world, well along in years and somewhat irascible, who would rather have been left alone. It is good to have his book anyway, although the author reveals precious little of his personal life. We do learn that he was born near London on April 28, 1873, and the reader is treated to a delightful vignette of that Victorian citadel in the Eighties.

"What a curious age it was," (he recalls). "Mrs. Grundy not only riveted fig leaves on every sculptured representation of the human form in the United Kingdom, but frequently decreed that the legs of tables, chairs, and the grand piano constituted an improper spectacle, and should be swathed in draperies. Shakespeare was played in expurgated versions. Ibsen was taboo." To Mr. Bauer's credit, he emigrated to Paris before attaining his majority. He was to make the bohemian capital his home for the ensuing twenty years.

Younger generations will perhaps be surprised to learn that Harold Bauer was first destined to be a violinist. Apparently he was pretty good, because Joachim offered to place him in the Royal College at the tender age of ten. The lad's metamorphosis from a promising fiddler to an even more accomplished pianist began in Paris, thanks to Paderewski. *"Sie mussen Klavier spielen; Sie haben so schönes Haar,"* the Polish master told him. So Bauer turned to the piano, and let his "beautiful hair" grow to the leonine mass which was to become his chief extra-musical stock in trade.

Like all peregrinating musicians, Bauer has a hatful of anecdotes. Those who scorn the "abroad" racket in the music business will appreciate his exposé of an erstwhile celebrated songstress, Mme. Nikita, whom he accompanied on a Russian tour about the turn of the century. The little lady made quite a hit in the provinces, it seems, except that she turned out later to be a full-blooded American, née Louise Nicholson. That's almost the end of the story, but not quite. One night while Bauer was asleep on a train, "Nikita" trimmed off half of his bushy mustache.

There are other pleasant memories in his bulging scrapbook. A constant procession of musical greats and near-greats thread their way through its pages: Von Bülow, Clara Schumann, Busoni, Scriabin, Casals, Albeniz, Sarasate, De Pachmann, Granados; the list is endless. On the other hand, there are things, too, that really make one wonder about the musical intelligence which Mr. Bauer should have been sharpening these many years.

For one, although any history will confirm that Debussy shuffled off this mortal coil in 1918, the author kills him off prematurely in a couple of places. But that is a mere error of fact and not of any consequence. More serious by far is the pianist's entirely unbecoming excoriation of music critics. Music criticism is "not alone totally superfluous, but actually obnoxious," he writes, " . . . the presence on earth of the *professional* music critic is an unqualified nuisance."

Well now, transpose the adjectives, and perhaps the latter part of the tirade at least would make sense. As it stands, certainly, it is a senile and silly observation, and hardly comes with grace from an artist who owes so much to competent critics. Mr. Bauer goes so far as to suggest that the French system—you just buy the space and write your own review—is best. Such a myopic view of "kept" journalism is incredible these days, and almost unforgivable in a man of Bauer's stature.

James Lyons, music critic of The Miami Herald, *formerly wrote on music for the* Boston Post, *the* Boston Globe, *and* The Atlantic Monthly.

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

DRAMATIC ORDERS

Shakespeare, or one of his characters, is in the imperative mood in each of the quotations below. Helen Pettigrew, of Charleston, Ark., asks you to match up the quotations with the characters listed at the right. A score of twelve is par, fourteen is very good, sixteen or better is excellent. Answers are on page 36.

1. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
2. Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate
   Nor set down aught in malice.
3. This above all: to thine own self be true.
4. Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition:
   By that sin fell the angels.
5. Deny thy father and refuse thy name.
6. Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
   Shed thou no blood.
7. Lay on, Macduff.
8. Then happy low, lie down!
   Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!
9. Away, you scullion! you rampallian! you
   fustilarian!
10. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
    It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
    The meat it feeds on.
11. Fight, gentlemen of England; fight bold yeomen!
12. Stand not upon the order of your going
    But go at once.
13. Melt Egypt into Nile! and kindly creatures
    Turn all to serpents!
14. If music be the food of love, play on.
15. I will be angry. Father, be quiet!
16. O, you must wear your rue with a difference.
17. Mark you this, Bassanio,
    The devil can cite scripture for his purpose.
18. Let me have men about me that are fat;
    Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights:
    Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look.
19. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
20. Assume a virtue, if you have it not.

( ) Julius Caesar
( ) Portia
( ) Ophelia
( ) Lady Macbeth
( ) Falstaff
( ) Cleopatra
( ) Duke Orsino
( ) Polonius
( ) Wolsey
( ) Hamlet
( ) Mark Antony
( ) Katharina
( ) Othello
( ) Lear
( ) Iago
( ) Juliet
( ) Richard III
( ) Henry IV
( ) Antonio
( ) Macbeth

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Grown Up Only in Spots

FOR WHAT WE HAVE RECEIVED. By Francis Toye. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1948. 313 *pp.* $4.

Reviewed by HARRY BULL

TO THE small number of Americans who knew the relatively highbrow and less publicized patrons of the Savoy Grille, this very British importation will make its chief appeal. Addicts of Sir Osbert Sitwell's life and times will look in vain for a similar depth of feeling, for such illuminating understanding of character or of the development of the contemporary arts, or even for the modest command of literary style one might expect from a man who has been for forty years an intermittent critic.

And yet, superficial and planless as they are, these reminiscences have a certain spontaneous, conversational charm. They include a rare picture of the almost archaic customs of the 500-year-old public school Winchester, which, being smaller, is perhaps even more exclusive than Eton. They offer a fund of anecdotal material on the near-great of Edwardian and Georgian London, and they fairly bristle with the outspoken and often entertaining opinions of one of those belligerently amateur Englishmen who was brought up, unrealistically enough, to see this world as his oyster. It did in fact turn out to offer him a wide variety of somewhat seedy pearls, and if he failed, both in his life and in the telling of it, to string them together as well as Cartier, the analytically-minded reader will find in the early chapters more of the explanation than the author had any idea of setting down. The reader, at least, will be quite prepared for the nervous breakdown that so surprised the author during one of his subsequent marital transgressions.

For he will have realized that the unnatural Victorian constraints of home and school life during the formative years of the Toyes would seriously handicap a sensitive personality obliged to face the changes of the next century. He will understand why, in Francis Toye's most mature opinion, Lord Beaverbrook and Shaw and Wells are deplored as having done most to "undermine the traditions and the practices of the England I love," and why "sheer bad manners and lack of breeding" are declared "to have contributed more than any other single factor to the weakening of English prestige in India." Behind the author's conservatism and glibness he will have sensed a veritable demon of insecurity that is only to be buttressed by games and clubs, by houseparties and travel in groups—in short by the hangovers from an unfulfilled childhood. Like so many modern people, especially in these overcomplex times, Mr. Toye has grown up only in spots. Conflicts arising from his early background and from the falseness of the values by which he was generally surrounded have kept him from maturing with his own talent.

His ear was his greatest gift. Music and a half dozen languages came easily. Even the large variety of his recorded jobs came chiefly from the circles to which this faculty gave him especial entree. But in almost every endeavor, except perhaps the great body of his London music criticism and his books on Verdi and Rossini, he seems to have remained half-dilettante. As a singer, a drummer, a composer, a voice teacher, a broadcaster, a nickel salesman, as manager of Boulestin's restaurant, and as a writer of editorials, novels, and plays, he appears too divided in personality to achieve first-rank professional status.

But since he makes no great claim of distinction, and indeed writes his story as that of a tiny cross section of England in transition, we may let it go at that and be grateful.

Who Feasts On Love

By Georgie Starbuck Galbraith

I HAVE used love as though it were a food;
Partaken daily, thinking it could give
The spirit sustenance and fortitude.
Love was the stuff by which I strove to live.

For such unwisdom hunger is my fate.
Who feasts on love alone must pay the price
Of near-starvation. Fools discover late
The wise use love as though it were a spice.

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THE LITERARY SAMPLER

EXCERPTS AND JOTTINGS FROM NEW AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Our Rudderless Liberalism

AMONG POSTWAR statesmen, Herbert Hoover, who is not usually thought to have much in common with the men of the progressive era—and whose methods and temper, in fact, were quite different—still adhered to much the same premises and accepted the same goals. Like the progressives, he expected to see a brilliant and expansive future, but he expected to reach it along the traditional highway. Franklin D. Roosevelt stands out among the statesmen of modern American liberalism—and indeed among all statesmen since Hamilton—for his sense of the failure of tradition, his recognition of the need for novelty and daring. His capacity for innovation in practical measures was striking, and the New Deal marked many deviations in the American course; but his capacity for innovation in ideas was far from comparable; he was neither systematic nor consistent, and he provided no clearly articulated break with the inherited faith. Although it has been said repeatedly that we need a new conception of the world to replace the ideology of self-help, free enterprise, competition, and beneficent cupidity upon which Americans have been nourished since the foundation of the Republic, no new conceptions of comparable strength have taken root and no statesman with a great mass following has arisen to propound them. Bereft of a coherent and plausible body of belief—for the New Deal, if it did little more, went far to undermine old ways of thought—Americans have become more receptive than ever to dynamic personal leadership as a substitute. This is part of the secret of Roosevelt's popularity, and, since his death, of the rudderless and demoralized state of American liberalism.

From "The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It," by Richard Hofstadter (Alfred A. Knopf).

Mirage in the Jungle

THE SUNSET WAS magnificent with the intensity and brilliance that can be found only in the tropics. The entire sky was black with the impending rain except for a narrow ribbon along the horizon. The sun had already disappeared, but its reflection was compressed, channeled into a band of color where the sky met the water. The sunset made an arc along the water like the cove of a harbor, but a strange and illusory harbor, washed in a vivid spectrum of crimson and golden yellows and canary greens. There was a string of tiny clouds shaped like miniature plump sausages and they had become a royal stippled purple. After a time, the men had the impression they were staring at a fabulous island which could have existed only in their imagination. Each detail glowed, became quiveringly real. There was a beach whose sands were polished and golden, and on the false shore a grove of trees had turned a magnificent lavender-blue in the dusk. The beach was separate from everything they had ever known; it possessed every outcropping of rock, every curve of sand dune on a barren and gelid shore, but this beach was alive and quivering with warmth. Above the purple foliage the land rose in pink and violet dales, shading finally into the overcast above the harbor. The water *before* them, illumined by the sunset, had become the deep clear blue of the sky on a summer evening.

It was a sensual isle, a Biblical land of ruby wines and golden sands and indigo trees. The men stared and stared. The island hovered before them like an oriental monarch's conception of heaven, and they responded to it with an acute and terrible longing. It was a vision of all the beauty for which they had ever yearned, all the ecstasy they had ever sought. For a few minutes it dissolved the long dreary passage of the mute months in the jungle, without hope, without pride. If they had been alone they might have stretched out their arms to it.

It could not last. Slowly, inevitably, the beach began to dissolve in the encompassing night. The golden sands grew faint, became gray-green, and darkened. The island sank into the water, and the tide of night washed over the rose and lavender hills. After a little while, there was only the gray-black ocean, the darkened sky, and the evil churning of the gray-white wake. Bits of phosphorescence swirled in the foam. The black dead ocean looked like a mirror of the night; it was cold, implicit with dread and death. The men felt it absorb them in a silent pervasive terror. They turned back to their cots, settled down for the night, and shuddered for a long while in their blankets.

It began to rain. The boat churned and pushed through the darkness, wallowing only a hundred yards offshore. Over them all hung the quick fearful anticipation of the patrol ahead. The water washed mournfully against the sides of the boat.

—From "The Naked and the Dead," by Norman Mailer (Rinehart).

—From "The Lost Art of Profanity," by Burges Johnson (Bobbs-Merrill).

"Baseball has revived the ancient custom of charging so much per oath."

California's Golden Days

THE AMERICAN community in early California fairly represented, as we shall see, the average national culture and character. But no other part of our land was ever so rapidly peopled as was California in the first golden days. Nowhere else were we Americans more affected than here, in our lives and conduct, by the feeling that we stood in the position of conquerors in a new land. Nowhere else, again, were we ever before so long forced by circumstances to live at the mercy of a very wayward chance, and to give to even our most legitimate business a dangerously speculative character. Nowhere else were we driven so hastily to improvise a government for a large body of strangers; and nowhere else did fortune so nearly deprive us for a little time of our natural devotion to the duties of citizenship. We Americans therefore showed in early California new failings and new strength. We exhibited a novel degree of carelessness and overhastiness, an extravagant trust in luck, a previously unknown

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—*Illustrations from "Dreadful California."*

"The women are almost unanimous in their determination not to make California more than a temporary residence."

blindness to our social duties, and an indifference to the rights of foreigners, whereof we cannot be proud. But we also showed our best national traits—traits that went far to atone for our faults. As a body, our pioneer community in California was persistently cheerful, energetic, courageous, and teachable. In a few years it had repented of its graver faults, it had endured with charming good humor their severest penalties, and it was ready to begin with fresh devotion the work whose true importance it had now at length learned—the work of building a well-organized, permanent, and progressive state on the Pacific Coast.

—*From "California," by Josiah Royce (1886), edited with an introduction by Robert Glass Cleland (Alfred A. Knopf.)*

Florida Papers, Please Copy

LET US NOW briefly consider the moral and religious state of society in California. We know that we are undertaking an ungrateful and painful task—that we shall awaken the animosity of those who have an interest in enticing settlers and that we shall provoke contradiction—but we beseech Heaven to pardon us for speaking the truth, and challenge our antagonists to disprove our statements.

We cannot pretend to disclose all the terrible iniquity of that society in the compass of a single chapter—the theme is too extensive, the facts too revolting. It requires space to unfold the scroll which records such damning facts, and time is needed for the mind to become sufficiently reconciled to the hideous details, to be able to listen to them without impatience or disgust. Suffice it to say that we know of no country in which there is so much corruption, villainy, outlawry, intemperance, licentiousness, and every variety of crime, folly, and meanness. . . .

—*From "Dreadful California," by Hinton Helper (1855), edited by Lucius Beebe and Charles M. Clegg (Bobbs-Merrill).*

Ways in the Jungle

THERE IS NOTHING to be done when red ants attack except to beat a hasty retreat, for these cannibals of the insect world advance in true military formation, eating everything that comes in their path. The red ant, however, is not without its uses, for it will destroy the white ant; I have seen them entering a nest of white ants, and emerging each with a white ant.

Apart from human beings, the most dangerous enemy of the lion is the porcupine, which is much sought after by them as a delectable tid-bit. When he comes upon a porcupine he rushes the creature, and immediately the porcupine erects his quills for protection. The lion does not hesitate to squash his victim with his paw, killing it with one rapid death-stroke. As he strikes the porcupine his paw becomes full of quills which are covered with fine barbs. The lion chews off these quills as far as they protrude, but the barbs frequently penetrate into the flesh, and also, when biting off the quills, they get into the lion's mouth. This leads to inflammation, and poisoning sets in rapidly.

To an ear accustomed to the sounds of the wilds it is easy to detect a cat stalking prey—one step at a time, pausing between each to listen, rustling the grass as it moves again; which is in striking contrast to the hyena, trotting as it does at a slow pace, or to a leopard, which is never heard at all until it is on top of one.

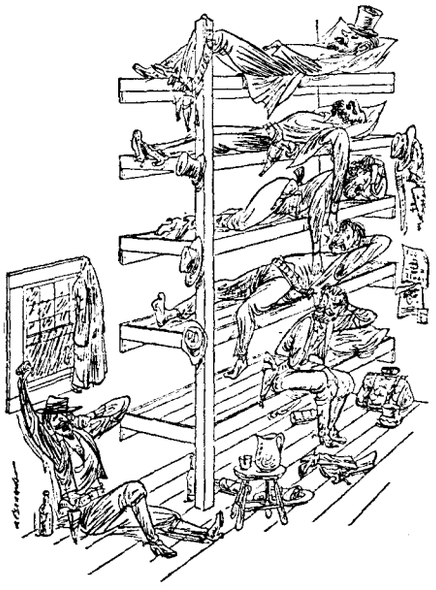
A baby baboon, only a day or two old, knows immediately that the danger of a scorpion lies in its tail, and, if he catches one, will first of all break off the tail and throw it away. . . . The baboon is an amazing creature; his instinct for danger is as uncanny as his wariness in regard to poison. I could take two apples, cut a hole in each, put poison in one, cover up both holes again, and throw them to a baboon; invariably he would eat the good apple and reject the poisoned fruit.

The belief that elephants have a common burial ground is sheer romance. The only excuse for the myth is that dead elephants are naturally more often found in the densest parts of thickets, for it is the instinct of all animals to retreat to solitude when they die. When an elephant feels the pangs of death it will go where there is water, and where it will be undisturbed, there to remain until the end comes. The elephant will visit its dead with almost a human sense of bereavement. I have observed instances where elephants have gone miles out of their paths to visit the final resting-place of an ancestor—or, perhaps, a spouse.

The Pygmies are real enough—fascinating, primitive, naive, brave, freakish. They are about four feet high, well-built, and sturdy, with strong arms and chests, and their faces are broad with huge noses. They do not wear clothing of any description, and never cook their food. They live in a forest of bamboos on and around the active volcano of Savinio, and of all the tribes I encountered in Africa their friendship was the hardest to win. But I managed to live with them for months.

When suffering from thirst I have found that the only effective method of retaining the moisture in the mouth is not to speak at all, but to grind one's teeth together and keep the tongue absolutely still. When a person is very thirsty there is a natural tendency to move the tongue round the mouth and swallow continuously, and this is the worst possible thing to do. If a person keeps his tongue behind the teeth the mouth will retain the moisture much longer than if the tongue is moving.

—*From "Jungle Man," by Major P. J. Pretorius (Dutton).*



"We repair to the best hotel in the place."

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The Saturday Review of Literature

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Bookmarks

IN an apparent effort to make Emily Post look to her dessert spoons, D. Van Nostrand Company has recently been promoting a "Book of Modern Etiquette," by Elinor Ames, with copy which carries us smack back to the 1920's. Beneath a drawing of a young woman and a young man in a taxicab (the young woman seems to be fumbling for her handkerchief, and high time, too) appears this caption: "She knew she had said the wrong thing." Well, that ought to get attention, all right—it got ours, and we read on:

> At last the party was over and they were on their way home. She had thought it would never end. She would never forget the "bad break" she had made. Up to that time, everything had gone so well, too. She was enjoying the party she had dreamed of so long. Then the terrible moment came . . . that frozen silence, Tom's pained expression, and the voices of the others all talking at once to cover her blunder.
>
> The whole unhappy situation could have been averted if only she had had the master guide to social conduct, etc., etc.

Not the slightest hint, you will notice, of what "she" actually said. Nor do we care what it was. "She" has our fullest sympathy. It is that lug Tom, sitting there, oh so smugly, in his corner of the cab, watching the nickels pop up, at whom all the arrows in our quiver of scorn are leveled. "Tom's pained expression," forsooth. So *that* was all he had to offer.

Tom's cue, when "she" said "the wrong thing," was to say a wronger. Trump her ace. Outbid the top bidder. Drag out the red herring. Pile Ossa on Pelion.

We like "she," whatever "her blunder" may have been. At least she knew it for a blunder. The wrongest things we have ever heard at affairs of this sort have never been recognized as "wrong things" by the utterers.

Anyway, "she" doesn't need a book. All "she" needs is a replacement for Tom.

* * *

This department is not concerned with the niceties of typographical design or title-page layout, but it reserves the right to speak its mind the next time a book comes apart in its hands.

* * *

Instance of linguistic recalcitrance (feminine) overheard on New York's Madison Avenue: "I was raised nine-tenths in Canada. When I recite the alphabet I say 'zed,' not 'zee.' And they'll never make me say 'skedule.' I can't *say* 'skedule'."

* * *

What newspaper will initiate the practice of publishing corrections regularly on page one?

* * *

The Kinsey report has rendered the educational institution which sponsored it a signal service. Hundreds of thousands of Americans now know, or ought to, that there is no such place as the "University of Indiana."

* * *

Through 1942, women were leading men (twelve to eleven, with two no-decision years) as winners of the Pulitzer Prize in fiction—and this reckoning properly includes Booth Tarkington twice, with the 1919 and 1922 awards. Since 1942, men have won five times in a row, with one blank. The grand total, 1918 through 1948, is: Men, sixteen; women, twelve; neither, three. This proves conclusively that a novelist stands a much better chance of winning the Pulitzer Prize by belonging to one sex or the other, rather than to no sex at all.

* * *

A football coach unendingly stresses fundamentals—passing the ball, falling on it, keeping the knees up. Continual basic training in the fundamentals of English (not necessarily of basic English) does no harm to an author, either.

* * *

There are some writers who seem to feel that God gave man the comma, as He did the seeds of the field, to scatter promiscuously in the hope that one would take root.

* * *

Many of the older generation can remember when Kinsey was only the name of a brand of whiskey.

* * *

Thomas Hardy's lapses in prose writing (remarkable in one who was so skilled an artificer in verse) are admirably, or unadmirably, exemplified in the jingles that occasionally crept into his sentences. We noted the following in a recent rereading of "Life's Little Ironies":

> Yet all the while King George and his court were at his favorite sea-side resort, not more than five miles off.
>
> She would be sitting quietly, any evening after dark, in the house of her father, the parish-clerk.
>
> He was one of the last of the artisan class.
>
> . . . the entry of the huge concatenation into the station.
>
> . . . sighed a melancholy man in the back of the van.

J. T. W.

Silence Is Something Lost

By Edwin Rolfe

NOTHING respects your solitude. The planes
like exhibitionists cavort all summer long,
stabbing the sky, sky-writing as they dart,
like bugs across the surface of a quiet pond.

Autos outside your window do not roll
in rhythm natural to man. The brakes
grate against ears accustomed now to noise
of plane and engine and the bombs of war.

Silence is something lost, almost forgotten,
known only as things are known in memory.
Silence and solitude, the two wings of the bird
of contemplation, flap on the turning spit

while the man with the slobbering lips looks on,
and grins, and eyes them with an idiot's stare.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Don't Resign"

SIR: I could scarcely wait to reach the conclusion of "Don't Resign from the Human Race" [*SRL* Aug. 7]. I kept feeling I must get there—that you would have something that would help wipe away the frightening depression that so often comes in the midst of the day's news. I think it was partly because I read so much into the paragraphs in which you scored Christians. And then the disappointment! Only the sentence, "Perhaps the faculty of anticipation in man could do it."

Didn't the prosecutor himself imply that we had something more than mere anticipation? "The great tragedy . . . was that man plucked out of Christianity for his own use what seemed easiest and most convenient, ignoring the rest." Granted (with reservations). But what is "the rest"? Could it be better than anticipation? "The aspect of ethics in Christianity . . . this he (man) ignored." Granted (again with reservations). But what if he wouldn't ignore them? "Thus Christianity became not so much a new way of life . . . but a series of corrupting theological systems." Granted (with reservations). But could it really be a new way of life? "There grew up the phenomenon of . . . the believing but not practising Christian." Granted (with reservations). But supposing there grew up the practising Christian? "Christianity has yet to be tried." Granted. And are we so far gone that we can't try it?

In Amsterdam Christians from every corner of the globe met in the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Their major concern is not ecclesiastical machinery. Their concern is the renewal of life of the church, the churches, individual Christians, that we may serve the human race of our generation and our children's generation.

The prosecutor has given those of us who look upon the church as the custodian of the gospel (the good news) a moving sermon we shall not soon forget. We need him among us.

HELEN E. BAKER.

Webster Groves, Mo.

Army Blot?

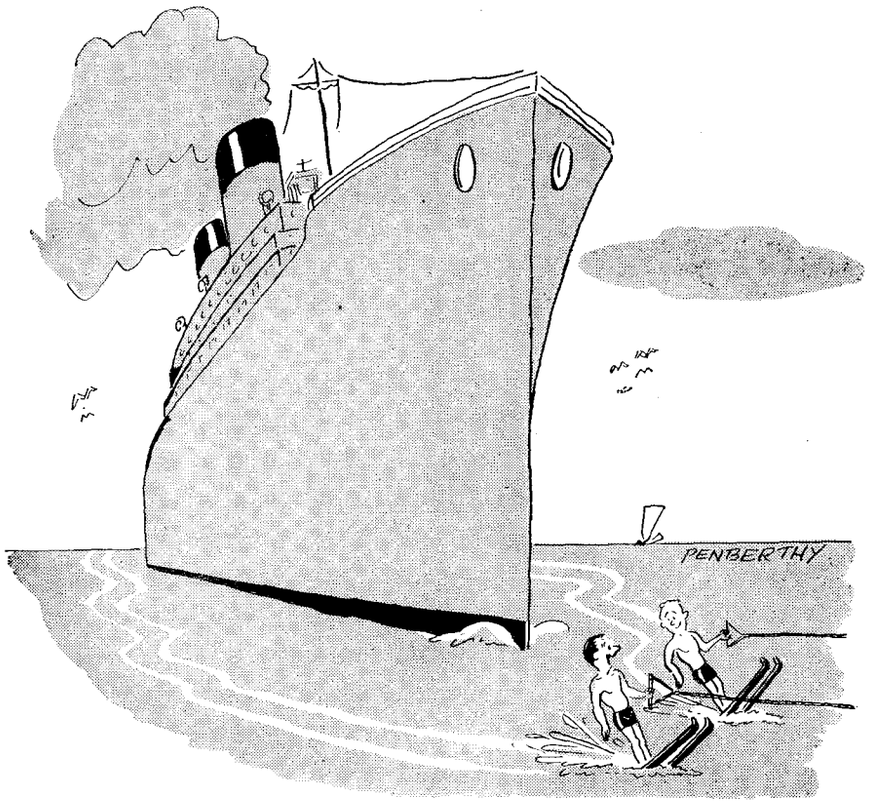
SIR: Harrison Smith's review of William Gardner Smith's "Last of the Conquerors" [*SRL* Aug. 28] failed to mention what is certainly the most significant item in the whole book, and the one which probably constitutes the basic reason why it was written . . . the perfidious action by certain United States Army authorities in perpetrating false accusations against Negro soldiers in German occupation units, resulting in studied discredit to the fighting record of Negro troops in the American Army and consequent loss of bloody-earned benefits of innocent individuals.

Harrison Smith admits that the book "with little doubt" is a recording of what the author saw and heard when he was sent to Germany with a Negro force as a part of our Army of Occupation. If the episode in question is entirely fiction, the author is then certainly open to censure and should be called upon to admit a serious error in literary license. If the episode is drawn from fact, and the author witnessed or came upon positive proof that Army authorities falsely accused innocent and upright Negro soldiers with good records, and forced, through military discipline, other members of their kind to sign fabricated statements against them, then decent Americans, North or South, dark or light, should combine in a cry to be heard throughout the nation against one of the darkest blots of which any army could be capable. The author should be lauded for his courage and clearly called upon to pour further bright light on the facts by naming names, times, and places involved in the shocking incident.

The whole matter should not be left where it is within the covers of Mr. Smith's "Last of the Conquerors." He should speak out in truth and in public one way or the other.

J. WILLIAM JONES.

Riverside, Calif.



"Bread and butter!"

Mis-evaluation

SIR: Under "Words" [*SRL* Aug. 28] you note that Alfred Korzybski's Institute of General Semantics is "dedicated to the proposition that the current ills of mankind can be attributed to the misuse of words." If by that you refer to his recognition that certain kinds of language habits are involved in or connected with certain kinds of over-simplification, distortion, confusion, disagreement, and personal disturbance, then you note well. If, however, you mean to imply that he is concerned with some plain-talk-formula, or choose-the-right-word-scheme, or sophistic define-your-terms-technique, then I am quite sure that he has a way of describing *your* mis-evaluation.

IRVING J. LEE.

Evanston, Ill.

Library Salaries

SIR: The otherwise excellent article "The Public Library Looks Ahead" [*SRL* July 3] contains a statement which is, at the least, misleading. To say that "it may take five years of advanced education to produce a good librarian, who then receives from $25 to $50 a week" is to give a generally false impression of *conditions today*. In support of my contention let me note that the average salary of the positions to which the June 1948 graduates of this school went was $2,780, that none was called upon to accept a position at a salary of less than about $2,600, and that only two graduates went to positions paying as little as $2,400. All this is rather different from "$25 to $50 a week," and, while I cite the figures which I know best, I have every reason to believe that reports from other graduate library schools in the country would reveal about the same statistics. The task of "recruiting" for our sadly undermanned profession has been a difficult one, and inadequate salaries have always been one of the chief factors; all the more reason,

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therefore, that the current situation be presented in as favorable a light as the facts warrant.

J. PERIAM DANTON,
Dean, School of Librarianship,
University of California.

Berkeley, Calif.

American Boorist

SIR: A note of deep gratitude to Henry C. Wolfe for "Innocents Abroad and World Peace" [*SRL* Sept. 4]. The behavior of that arrogant, heedless minority by which all Americans are usually judged abroad was formerly only a source of acute discomfort to more sensitive Americans. As Mr. Wolfe points out with admirable restraint—and therefore high effectiveness—what the world thinks of us has now become a matter vital to the future of civilization. Would that there were some simple way of opening the eyes of the American boorist!

IRA M. FREEMAN.

New Brunswick, N. J.

SIR: And what of "Innocents" at home? To say nothing of adult offenders! In motoring nearly 5,000 miles this summer, I was appalled by the people encountered, especially the women, rarely a skirt, just slacks or shorts, a bust-supporter, a cigarette between painted lips, weather-beaten skin—no hat—and nothing feminine or pleasing about them. It made me question how any man could take one to his arms, and it seemed the obvious reason for divorces and homosexuals, —alarmingly increasing.

VIRGINIA KENT CUMMINS.

New York, N. Y.

"The Comics . . . Very Funny!"

SIR: I was pleased to find that Dr. Wertham's stimulating article on the comics has not, after three months, been overshadowed by subsequent alarming developments on a "global" scale.

If there are still any adult readers who would defend unlicensed access to this passionately defended form of entertainment, I should like to refer them to a piece of news in the *New York Herald Tribune* for August 19. It comes from New Albany, Ind., and carries, as headlines: "Boy, 7, Tortured, 3 Others Accused. Officials Lay Act to Comic Books, Ask Ban." The article goes on to supply the grisly details of the "torture," and adds, "Floyd County officials asked a ban on comic-book sales today."

Would that officials far and wide would emulate the Albany group!

REBECCA L. MIXNER.

Summit, N. J.

Sir: Any high-school or college teacher of English would believe that something has been put over on you in the letter of David Pace Wigransky [*SRL* July 24]. I have taught college freshmen for twenty years, and in that time I have encountered only two college freshmen who could put a case in such an adult manner. There is nothing about this letter that would indicate it to be the unassisted writing of a fourteen-year-old boy, especially a boy who has been fed on a diet of *comics*. Who wrote this letter for him? Could be a manufacturer of comic books.

M. P. KEELEY.

Columbia, Mo.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Likewise impressed almost beyond belief,* SRL *checked the validity of David Wigransky's letter with his principal at the Calvin Coolidge Senior High School in Washington, D. C. We were assured the composition was characteristic of Mr. Wigransky's work.*

Sir: I agree altogether with Mr. Wigransky's opinions on the comic-book question, only I would add something to his criticism of psychiatrists. The deep-seated reason for their hatred of comic books is their hatred of women and sex. The comic books are easily our most tolerant and democratic literature. In comic books colored or dark-skinned characters very often appear, fighting, working, adventuring *on equal terms* with the white characters. The dark-skinned character may be a breath-taking villain but he always has strength and dignity. The dark-skinned character is frequently pictured as being splendidly heroic. The white and colored characters very often come to one another's rescue. All this must have a wonderful effect on race relations among the younger citizens of our country.

About the sex-female angle, comic books always picture women as beautiful and dignified whether they are good or villainous. Girls are shown as 'superwomen" in ways that should healthily inflate the ego of our brow-beaten female American womanhood. Girls are always beautifully shaped, scantily clothed very often, it is true, but this, if anything, glorifies sex, as is proper, instead of befouling it as so many of today's moral and civic leaders are trying to do. Comic books are the only part of our current literature that treat the female with liking and respect. This is tremendously beneficial to our girls and may do much to dilute the poisonous stream of adverse attack aimed at modern females by scores of psychiatrists and clergymen today.

ALMA BOOKER.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Kingdon on Wallace

SIR: Is it expected that those of us who oppose Wallace will be glad to see Kingdon's tirade, and pleased that neither his adherents nor those undecided will get any idea what Mr. Wise has to say in "Meet Henry Wallace" [*SRL* Aug. 21]? Inasmuch as Kingdon's only reference to the book is to say that it quotes Wallace extensively and does not tackle the question what makes him think and act as he does, no one can claim that this is a review.

Now Mr. Kingdon is not the only disillusioned PCAer around. In PCA's early days those who felt a need to fight what they thought to be Communist influence had small reason to regard Kingdon as an ally, and few can take more credit for foisting the Iowa Mahatma on American liberals than Kingdon himself. Indeed, Kingdon's theory of Wallace's Oedipus complex toward Roosevelt might go a long way to explaining Kingdon on Wallace. At any rate, to those who heard him speak in '46 and '47, his current position is hard to stomach.

WARREN MORSE.

New York, N. Y.

"All you had to say was 'Shakespeare' and the refrigerator was ours, but—no!—'Francis Bacon'!"

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Seeing Things

OPEN SEASON

EXPERIENCE cannot down it nor probability extinguish it. The leanest diet, faced for the longest period, fails to starve it. Among first nighters there always is, there always must be, the hope that the miracle will happen and the lightning strike again—tonight; at this very opening about which little or much has been heard and good or bad things whispered.

It was this hope which sent Jules Lemaître up the narrow stairs at 37 Passage de l'Elysée-des-Beaux-Arts on a May evening in 1887. No doubt he had gone with grave misgivings. He was to see a bill of one-acts performed by amateurs and staged by a clerk at the Paris Gas Company. But, as can happen, as does happen, Lemaître had not journeyed forth in vain. He had witnessed theatrical history in the making. The clerk's name, you see, was Antoine; the organization's the Théâtre Libre.

Since the theatre's beginning this same hope has summoned people from the comforts of their homes to brave the discomforts and the disillusionments of countless squandered hours in the presence of the stage. It is the abiding will-o'-the-wisp of playgoers. More than being a mirage, however, it proves, from time to time and often unforeseeably, the most exciting, the most rewarding of realities.

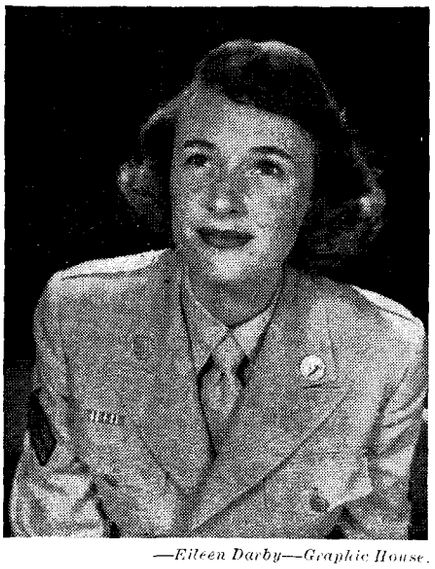
If this hope must be thanked for keeping the theatre alive, it may be blamed for keeping critics alive, too. Without it they would wither away and their tribe vanish, thereby solving at least one of the theatre's problems. "A critic is a man who expects miracles," wrote Huneker. He is also a man who believes in them. Otherwise he could not tolerate his job.

He would not, if in his right mind, elect to face all those fruitless evenings to which the law of averages condemns him every season. He could not endure the thought of the worthless, misguided, or mediocre stuff to which he is exposed as an occupational hazard. He could not persuade himself to set out night after night unless, in his heart, he nourished the sustaining belief that tonight, tomorrow night, any night, it might be his privilege and high good fortune to encounter one of those offerings which justifies both the theatre and critics.

In heaven a critic may give truth to Anatole France's definition and relate the adventures of his soul among masterpieces. But on this planet a reviewer, even granting that he has a soul, has a hard time finding new masterpieces. The hope that they will appear is what springs eternal in the critical breast, and never more strongly than at a season's beginning.

The summer is a potent refresher; starvation a sure whetter of the appetite, and man's ability to forget what he does not find pleasure in remembering one of the greatest of his blessings. The fatigues of a journey, the pains of an operation, the first anguishes of grief—happily these are things which our memories do not choose to retain. Add to them, on a lower echelon of suffering, the boredom of bad books read, of bad movies seen, and of evenings spent without profit or delight in the theatre. Their irritations also fade and are forgotten. In the case of the stage, the summer months wipe the slate clean.

The first fall opening is bound to have a certain excitement about it. The most hardened reviewers approach it with that quickening of the pulse which children know every September on the first day of school. There is the gang to be seen, the vacation to be talked over, the gossip to be collected. There are forthcoming events to be discussed. There is the awareness of another year. Yes, and, above all, there is that thing with feathers which Richard Harrity rightly insists is hope, hope for the months ahead, hope for the evening at hand.



—Eileen Darby—Graphic House.

"Capable" Phyllis Thaxter—"A theatrical season is as strong as its best plays... never as weak as its weakest productions."

If the theatre had any sense of theatre, it would, of course, start off each new season with a hit. It would design for itself the kind of entrance prized by its stars. More often than not, however, it assembles its devotees at the summer's end to pour ice water on their hopes. This is the odd way it chooses to test their loyalty. This is the chilling manner in which the current season, so active in its promises, was inaugurated this fall.

The Actors Studio is an interesting idea. André Antoine would have approved of it. So would Stanislavsky. So would anyone who knows how next to impossible it is for young players in New York to get not only a hearing but proper training in their craft. By its own admission the Actors Studio is not a school. It is "a workshop, meeting regularly to discuss the preparation and projection of plays." It is a non-profit organization. Its executive staff includes such well-known, zealous, and gifted professionals as Elia Kazan and Cheryl Crawford.

SO far, so good, in fact, very good. Yet the difference between what is valuable for classroom study and what is ripe for public production is the difference separating junior's theme from an acceptable magazine article. That junior has to master his alphabet is a conviction shared by most parents. But that in the process of doing so the people who are not related to him should be asked to sit in on his lessons and pay for the privilege is quite another matter.

Had the Actors Studio produced Bessie Breuer's "Sundown Beach"* before invited audiences whose interests were umbilical or professional, it would, no doubt, have justified itself as the student exercise it is. To offer it on Broadway, however, as a regular production of the commercial theatre is doing both it and the patrons (paying and with press passes) an injustice.

Miss Breuer's concern is a group of combat crews from the Air Force who have cracked up mentally and are recuperating, during the last months of the war, at a hospital on an island off

*SUNDOWN BEACH, a play by Bessie Breuer. Directed by Elia Kazan. Setting by Ben Edwards. Lighting by Jean Rosenthal. The Actors Studio production presented by Louis J. Singer. With a cast including Jennifer Howard, Cloris Leachman, Steven Hill, Julie Harris, Warren Stevens, Phyllis Thaxter, Don Hanmer, Edward Binns, etc. At the Belasco Theatre.

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with RAY COLLINS
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CLINTON SUNDBERG

Produced and Directed by
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A Rainbow Productions, Inc. Picture
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STAGE

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Sketches & Lyrics by ARNOLD B. HORWITT • Music by RICHARD LEWINE
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"ANNIE GET YOUR GUN"
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IMPERIAL THEA., 45 St., West of B'way
AIR-CONDITIONED. MATS. WED. & SAT. 2:30

Florida. They spend their time in a restaurant attractive in only one respect, and that is that so few of its customers ever appear to be asked to pay for the countless drinks they order. The troubles of these tragic young men are many and should be moving. They include jangled nerves, broken lives, a sense of guilt for the destruction they have caused, dark futures, economic cleavages, hasty war marriages, and even a tiresome officer who suffers from a messiah complex. But among all these troubles women are the worst. Miss Breuer shares certain of Mr. Kinsey's absorptions. She goes further, however, because she anticipates his promised second volume.

THE easy, the obvious explanation of the failure of her play as a script is to say that it is over-populated. In other words, that, in spite of an occasional effective scene, Miss Breuer allows herself no time in which to do more than a rough sketch of any of her characters. Of these she has twenty-eight. This might in itself constitute an indictment if only "Hamlet" did not include some twenty-six characters (nearly every one of them memorable), not counting the walk-ons.

Cluttered to rush-hour proportions as Miss Breuer keeps her stage, the real weakness of "Sundown Beach" lies in the absence of quality rather than the presence of crowds. Miss Breuer's subject-matter is touching; her writing is not. It is overblown, noisy, empty, and absurd. Her dialogue is often as distressing to listen to as it must be embarrassing to utter.

A measure of the inadequacies of Miss Breuer's text is that even Elia Kazan, one of the ablest of our directors, cannot hide them. He tries valiantly, with an understandable sense of desperation. And he is aided by such capable young players as Edward Binns, Phyllis Thaxter, Cloris Leachman, and Don Hanmer. Even so, Miss Breuer's play remains a private experiment which should not have been made public. It may provide parts wholesale for aspiring members of the Actors Studio, but it offers little or nothing to those out front.

The disappointments of "Sundown Beach" will undoubtedly remain with us no longer than it does.* Such a dampening of initial hopes is at once typical and immaterial. Blessedly, a theatrical season, unlike a chain, is as strong as its best plays and never as weak as its weakest productions.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

*Opened September 7; closed September 11. No doubt a case of come seven, go eleven.

STAGE

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Directed by ELIA KAZAN
with JESSICA TANDY
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HENRY FONDA
in
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A play by THOMAS HEGGEN & JOSHUA LOGAN
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(*Continued from page 6*)

the merits of various minor works of theirs may be, titans of the drama. For another example, Barrymore's Hamlet was indisputably better than Walter Hampden's, and any critic who attempts to deny it is either a numbskull or a charlatan. But in general the qualities of plays and playwrights are matters of opinion rather than objective fact. The critic, whatever his training and knowledge of the drama, is merely a specialized playgoer. Although he goes in on passes, occupies good aisle seats, and gets paid for it, he watches a play and has a good or bad time just like any other playgoer. Also, like any other playgoer, he has an opinion, usually pretty violent, about the show, an opinion that was probably formed not after hours of reflection, but on the spot and with some emotion. The only difference between him and the non-professional playgoer is that he is expected to rationalize his opinions, however he may have reached them.

One other similarity between the two types of playgoers is that their verdict on the play is based not only on whatever knowledge they may have of the theatre, but on their complete viewpoint on life and letters. The critic's general standards of taste and his outlook on the world about him play as much of a part in the formation of his opinion as his specific dramatic standards. Since his critical judgment is the result of his entire personal equipment, including his most private prejudices and predilections, he is deceiving you if he tries to represent it as anything other than subjective. Try as hard as he will, he is certain to get those personal prejudices into what he writes, and the only fair and sensible thing for him to do is acknowledge them as frankly and completely as possible.

IT is only when the reader is aware what the general outlook of the reviewer is that drama criticism can be of value to him as guide to his own theatregoing. To become very personal about it: as a reviewer, I have a fondness for the Irish drama, feel that good looks are no handicap to a young actress, like melodramas and rather commonplace popular music, am suspicious of ballets and grand opera, and do not mind a bit of liberal preachment in my plays. I believe in confessing these and other articles of my artistic and political credo as outspokenly as possible so that the reader, checking my prejudices with his own, can tell just how far he can go by my judgments. This may not make me a better critic, but I am convinced that it makes me a fairer guide for any readers I may have.

Although his opinions seem to me the most interesting part of what a critic has to say, it is also his duty to offer an adequate notion of what the play is about. I do not mean that he should go in for telling the plot at any great length. That not only makes for dulness, since few critics have any notably skilful narrative style, but it interferes with the possible pleasure of the theatregoer, who may want to find out the details of the story for himself. Too, it can be highly confusing.

There is also an idea, frequently advanced by people of the theatre, that the reaction of the audience should be reported with thoroughness and respect. This is a notion which should be accepted by the critic only to a very limited extent. If the first-nighters are unusually ecstatic, exceptionally cold, or more than ordinarily impolite—which would be quite a feat for any audience—the fact may be worth noting in the review. But as a rule, first-night audiences are so carefully hand-picked, their reaction to the proceedings is so studied and artificial, and because of their professional connections they are so frequently hypocritical in their behavior, that it is generally an utter waste of time for the critic to bother about their conduct. A cheap and obvious play is far more likely to be appreciated by first-nighters than a play that has something unusual to say in form or idea. In addition, the critic, being a surprisingly human fellow, is likely to find excessive laughter and applause during a play he knows to be commonplace and superficial so annoying that, in resentment, he may be harder on it than strict justice warrants.

There is a widely held belief that a higher standard of reviewing would prevail if the critics were not so pressed for time, if they had twenty-four hours in which to mull over their ideas about a new play, instead of rushing to the typewriter to record them immediately. This I consider decidedly dubious. The fact is that it rarely takes any playgoer, professional or paying guest, long to make up his mind whether or not he likes the play he is seeing. It is a matter of immediate impact. It does take considerably longer to set down the quality of the work and the reasons for one's judgment, but to do that is merely a knack which anyone wtih the briefest newspaper experience can readily pick up. Moreover, there is undoubtedly value in the record of a critic's immediate reaction to a drama set down in the first white heat of admiration or disgust. The sober second thoughts, if any, can be recorded in the reviewer's week-end column, after he has had time for ivory-tower reflection.

THE chief difficulty about the hasty writing of a review, besides what it does to one's prose style, lies in the matter of emphasis. Let me again use a personal example. When Philip Barry's metaphysical dramatic parable "Here Come the Clowns" opened some years ago, I found myself admiring it more than I had any of Mr. Barry's previous plays, but various points in its later sections dissatisfied and disturbed me. When I read over my review the following morning, it struck me that while I had said everything I wanted to about the play's virtues and weaknesses, I had perhaps laid too much stress on the frailties; the notice did not sound quite as favorable as I had intended. So I went to see the play again and wrote a second review. In it I said virtually the same things I had before, but I put the emphasis more strongly on the virtues, with the result that the total impression it gave was far more enthusiastic. I still regret that I didn't write the second review the first time, but, inasmuch as the reservations were so strongly in my mind at the time I rushed to the office, I think there was value in that earlier reaction and that it was worth reporting. Furthermore, if I had written my first-night notice twenty-four or more hours later, I suspect it would have taken the same tone, since the weaknesses would have continued to bother me until I had described them in print.

The idea of delaying publication of reviews for twenty-four hours after the opening-night has been tried upon two occasions in the New York press. The first case was that of St. John Ervine, the British playwright, critic, and scold, who was brought to these shores by the defunct *New York*

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World. Mr. Ervine was given a day to brood over his verdicts, and the result was what I believe has come to be recognized as some of the dullest and most unperceptive reviews ever printed. More recently, *PM*—which has now become the *New York Star*—decided, for mechanical reasons, that Louis Kronenberger's reviews should appear two days after the opening. In this case the result was a succession of strikingly thoughtful, exceptionally intelligent notices—indeed the only ones which, day in and day out, deserved to be classed essentially as criticism rather than reviewing. Thus the two cases seem to represent a stand-off on the question of how delay helps the critic in his work. It happens, however, that during other parts of their careers both Mr. Ervine and Mr. Kronenberger did reviews which appeared the day after the opening and both demonstrated the identical qualities they showed when given the time to reflect.

THE virtue of having reviews printed the day after the opening is that it emphasizes the fact that the theatre is news. The man who reads journalistic drama criticism wants to know about the show which opened last night and know about it without delay, and, since it doesn't harm the quality of the criticism, there is no reason not to give it to him. Nor is the hardship it works upon the critic exactly oppressive, even if at times he is hurried a little bit too much for comfort. It is frequently supposed that the time element gives the reviewer for an afternoon paper a great advantage over his colleagues on the morning journals. This is true to a certain extent, but not as much as is usually suspected. When I was reviewing for the morning *New York Herald Tribune*, I had to have my notice finished by 12:15 and then had fifteen minutes, while it was being set and put in the forms, to fix up my grammatical errors. Now, on the afternoon *Post-Home News*, I have until 1:30. The chief difference is that at present I waste more time in getting started; the actual writing takes little more time than it used to. My successor on the *Herald Tribune*, Howard Barnes, has an earlier deadline now. He has to be finished before twelve o'clock, which does seem to me just a little too early. Anyway, the chief effect of the difference in time allotment between the morning and evening reviewers is that if, by any chance, both of us should hit upon the same brilliant thought, it is inevitably believed that the afternoon critic stole it.

Now to get back to that tradition about critics being willing to sacrifice a good play to a witty line. To this I can only say that I have known some critics in my time who struck me as incompetent, but none who did not love the theatre too much and value his critical standards too selfishly to commit such malfeasance. As much as he may like to crack a joke, the reviewer is even more anxious to discover something good.

The truth is that we who write about the theatre are far gentler toward plays and far more generous with our praise than anyone else concerned with the stage. If you want to hear really violent condemnation of a drama, I suggest you eavesdrop on a group of actors, producers, or playwrights at Sardi's or "21" after an opening. They have just come from backstage where they flattered the star outrageously, and here over a drink, they tell their cronies what they actually think! It has been my experience, and I think it is that of all my colleagues, that far more readers write in to denounce us when we praise a play than when we pan it. After all, we are causing people to pay good money for shows we have seen on passes, and when they are disappointed they certainly take it out on us.

The suspicion that critics are excessively fond of bright lines arises in part from the necessity for their putting on a good show of their own in their reviews. The critic *should* be intelligent in his judgments, but he *must* be readable. And there is no doubt that people prefer to read and invariably cherish the knocks rather than the boosts. The ads may quote the reviewers who bestow kind words, but the public quotes the man who says something sharply nasty, even if it isn't exceptionally witty. This does make it tempting for the critic to write biting things, but there are so many bad plays and incompetent performances that he does not have to use them on the few worth commendation.

Most certainly the drama critic should say bright and amusing things whenever he can. His job is something more than merely reviewing plays as they open, contemplating trends, and estimating the virtues and defects of passing playwrights and actors. He should keep the reader interested not only in the play under discussion—which he can do by either praising it with a certain amount of gusto, or taking it apart with some trace of bitterness or humor—but in the theatre as an institution. I don't know that I or any of my colleagues are skilful enough to do so, but a properly able reviewer can discuss a dramatic season in which he has felt called upon to castigate everything that has come along and still make it seem that, bad as things may be at the moment, the theatre itself is capable of greatness and magic. Unless he makes you feel that the stage is worth the attention and appreciation of intelligent people, despite its frailties, he is doing but part of his job. And if he isn't lively enough to give a passably good show, the reader is right in not bothering about him. The critic has no more right to be dull than a playwright.

IT is sometimes urged that there ought to be a fairly rapid turnover of drama critics on a newspaper; that a reviewer, after a few years, gets jaded and contemptuous of the theatre and comes not to like anything. It seems to me that this is nonsense. Any critic, if he ever has shown signs of ability, is a far better one after he has become mellowed, filled with a fuller understanding of his job, and provided with a practical background of his subject. It is said that reviewers get tired of their jobs. Well, some of them do, but then they quit. I have never known a critic of long standing who didn't genuinely love the theatre, and that goes very strongly for such presumptive theatre-haters as George Jean Nathan and the late Percy Hammond. As for the belief that the younger critic is filled with an enthusiasm that his elders lack, it is even more nonsensical. The young critic is generally convinced that he must show he is on the job by attacking almost everything, and especially by putting established talents in their place. It is the experienced critic who knows the value of appreciation and praise properly bestowed.

There are, however, at least two pitfalls which may trap a veteran critic. One is that he may grow either too rigid or too tolerant in his judgment. The other is that he may grow too narrow in his general outlook. Of the two, the second strikes me as the more dangerous. One of the unfortunate facts about the American theatre is that, whether he wants it or not, the New York drama critic possesses tremendous power. He possesses it because, in spite of the classic examples of successes he has denounced and flops he has praised, producers continue to bow too readily to his adverse notices and fail to put up a proper fight against them. Because of this power and the tendency of everyone concerned with the stage to think of nothing else, the critic is always in danger of getting delusions of grandeur about both himself and the theatre. The stage becomes the center of his universe. His criticism be-

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comes divorced from the world at large, and exists in a cultural vacuum. The drama should be a dynamic thing which, however timeless in subject matter it presumes to be, draws its strength from the life of the nation and the world from which it stems. Ivory-tower criticism of it is unhealthy and soon loses touch with reality.

To prevent himself from becoming inbred and narrow in what he has to say of the theatre, it seems to me that the critic should travel as much and as frequently as he can. He should make an effort to keep in touch with what is going on in other parts of the world, and particularly in the other arts. I have been frequently accused of using my columns to discuss matters that have to do with the theatre but vaguely, and I confess that I may go too far in that direction. But I still think that the idea is right, that criticism which uses the stage as a springboard for a contemplation of the world is, in the end, the healthiest and most valid kind.

As for the matter of making the standards of one's criticism too rigid or too tolerant, I can only say that the price of avoiding either extreme is eternal vigilance. If the critic is to be of any value to the theatre and his audience, it is sheer cowardice if he tries to avoid being a cheerleader for what he admires. The reviewer who can't appreciate good trash, while still knowing and reporting that it is trash, is, I say dogmatically, a bad critic, and so is a reviewer who is afraid of praise or who lets it run away from him.

On the other hand, if a critic doesn't have fairly stringent standards, his praise is worthless, whether it is expended on good things or bad. Too great tolerance is something to be guarded against, for it tends to corrupt both the critic and the theatre upon which he uses it. There is at least one time when a critic should be really bitter. It is bad enough to be tolerant to a harmlessly bad show, but when a playwright or actor presents something that cheapens the theatre, to be gentle to him is the really critical sin against the Holy Ghost. Finally, there is the temptation to be kind to good or ambitious intentions. The author who shoots at the moon and misses surely deserves

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Poetry. *The variety and exuberance of American poetry is revealed again in two solid anthologies reviewed this week. Louis Untermeyer's collection of the New England poets runs to 636 pages; Oscar Williams's anthology, 250 pages longer than Mr. Untermeyer's, is labeled "A Little Treasury of American Poetry," as if the editor was apologizing for everything he had left out. Both men are poets of distinction. As anthologists, the first is a professional in the best sense of the word, with a critical and an historical perspective, whose collections of American and British poetry are known in nearly every school and college; the second has been criticized for his tendency to evaluate the past through the critical eyes of the present.*

Mirror of Our Native Spirit

A LITTLE TREASURY OF AMERICAN POETRY. Edited by Oscar Williams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1948. 876 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by ALFRED KREYMBORG

IT IS difficult for any man who has committed himself to the composition of American anthologies to review the work of later editors with catholicity. Open though his mind may be toward poets of a younger age and toward some younger compiler who views the American scene from the vantage point of the latest perspective, the older man will remember that he himself in his time was far from perfect in ultimate taste and judgment. And, in finding fault with the present editor for sins of commission and omission, he is merely repeating charges to which his own labors were subjected in the past. American poetry is so rich and varied and so fresh in adding new names to its dynamic stream as to cause many differences over what is best in our leading art and most worthy of preservation.

The indefatigable Oscar Williams, a poet in his own right and an experienced anthologist, has just arrived with a treasury of the chief poets from colonial times to the present day and devotes the first short part to the Amerindian. In his introduction, written in the worst prose I've ever read from the pen of a poet, he underscores the fact that the "Wallam Olum," a story of creation from which he quotes a moving [illegible] the

Some amazing jumbles and contradictions and disproportion ensue in the course of the introduction and the anthology, but at least we are forewarned that "this collection is not a history of the United States in verse," since "poetry is the mirror of the native spirit, not of events." There can be no valid argument against such a pronouncement. However, Williams compromises with his private taste by lambasting Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, *et al.*, in the preface and then including some of their "largely meretricious work" in the collection because it was "so popular in the previous century." The mystified reader might ask for similar leniency toward later poets who were popular once and are now in disfavor. But the editor makes no further concessions. This closed door would be admirable if he had not left out some of the worthy pioneers of the recent prewar generation which ushered in our American renascence. He has even neglected worthies of the Forties who have no place among the many new poets who open and close the finale.

One is also dismayed by the chronological order of the anthology and the confusion it must raise in the innocent reader. Poets appear in the order of their birth-years and not in the order of their first publications or, still better, in juxtaposition with their fellows at a given time—in groups, for example. Reducing the huge book to its mathematical components, we find only fifty-one poets in the course of 300 birth-years, and thirty-one poets

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makes the reader ask: "Where are the men and women of the middle or older generation who are still writing worthy things?" They may be found, of course, on earlier pages.

It seems to one old reader that the source of this paradoxical trend may be found in Oscar Williams's own career as an ambitious poet and editor. In early manhood, he gave up poetry for the more immediate needs of a decent livelihood in the advertising field and, when he returned to Pegasus twenty years later, adapted his talented wings to the mood, temper, and style of the younger generation. And he has served himself and that generation well through previous anthologies. Since his critical judgment of the past is modeled on the present, with its terrific pessimism (to which I have no objection) and its horror of anything resembling our former optimism, those poets are represented who bear some family resemblance, whether of fathers, brothers, or sons, either to Williams the poet or Williams the editor. This, it should be added, has always been the natural tie between poets and what they love or admire in other poets.

Oscar Williams has labored well in behalf of his predilections by giving us whole gamuts of verse through which we may view and enjoy each of his favorite poets on a scale reflecting more than one side of that poet's art. The volume also contains book-length poems and, in more than one instance, space is devoted to poets whose work merits the broad recognition they had not received from former anthologists. At the end of the volume a gallery of photographs unveils our bewhiskered, mutton-chopped, and mustachioed forefathers along with some clean-shaven heirs or successors and likewise some daughters or independent women. Behind these various faces and profiles one receives intimate revelations of the extent and greatness of our land in creative reflection. Then one may settle differences that arise among critics by sitting down with the poets' actual poetry, and let our interior lives respond to theirs. In the long run artists belong, not to professional wise men, but to anonymous men and women who, in the mass, finally decide the fate of all artists, however unconsciously. It is significant that the present anthology appears at a time when "the world is in a chasis," as O'Casey's Paycock observed to his friend Jockser. American poetry as a whole is a wonderful weapon against the recurrent threats of Mars and may be recommended as a decidedly salient arm in the cause of peace on earth now and hereafter.

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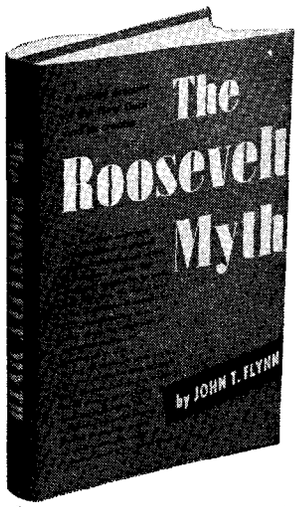

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Sentient America—Gross, Directionless

PATERSON (BOOK TWO). By William Carlos Williams. New York: New Directions. 1948. *Unpaged.* $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR

FOR many years now William Carlos Williams has been an important name among advance-guard writers. He began as an objectivist, the best among the group, but has striven to find an American subject and an American idiom. In "Paterson," the second part of which is now published, he has found a large subject, and American poetry will be the richer for it.

The subject is sentient America, gross and directionless, brought to focus in a city, Paterson, and given poetic statement through readily available symbols. The monologist is the poet, tough-minded, ironic, alternately making icy asides and marveling at the unquenchable life that bubbles up through difficulties and defeat; the park is woman, life, children, and the unthinking source; the waterfall is the movement of life; the rock is death and the unknowable. The symbols function loosely, relating only on occasion to Williams's tangential, sometimes shrewd and sometimes oversimplified comments.

If Williams had been an Elizabethan he would have written broadsheets about London life, about two-headed children, strange murders, and the seamy underside of city life. Much of the marvelous material—an earth tremor, a daredevil diving to his death, a hydrocephalic visited by George Washington, long pages from the letters of a frustrated poetess, sentences out of Alexander Hamilton, etc.—are given in prose paragraphs, either because it could not be incorporated easily into the poetry or to show that day-to-day living is quite as "poetic" as the conscious lines of a poet.

The theme that runs through the poem is, in part, that of Eliot's "The Waste Land." There is a world of disintegration ("Divorce is the sign of knowledge in our time"), of crass values ("Ain't they beautiful"), of decayed beliefs ("The church spires still spend their wits against the sky"), and of impulses to beautiful style unable to discover the curve of their own being in a world crusted over by industrialism ("The language, tongue-tied"). There are lines about the isolation of the poet, about the universities being filled with "knowledgeable idiots," about those "guilty bastards," the industrialists, about legislators "uninstructed, incapable of self instruction," and about the working classes, among whom "some sort of breakdown has occurred." Despite the exaggeration, the America Williams excoriates—and yet loves—is true enough; in the idiom and in the characters who people "Paterson" it is unmistakable. Yet America has managed a thin margin of spiritual achievement. "Paterson" itself is a part of the evidence that it has. And, ironically, some of the pathos and beauty of the poem are in the idiom born of crassness and vulgarity:

> Forget it! For God's sake, Cut
> out that stuff

And

> A cop is directing traffic
> across the main road up
> a little wooded slope toward
> the conveniences

When a poem is as distinguished and deserving of praise as "Paterson," one hesitates to criticize adversely. Yet such criticism is necessary, particularly because some highly reputable critics have made great claims for it. "Paterson," despite these claims, is not of a rank with "The Waste Land." If the next two volumes are similar to the first two, it will belong with "The Bridge." Like "The Bridge" it will, unless Williams saves it in the next two volumes, fail to get a sufficient historical and philosophical perspective on contemporary America. What is the reader to make of the statement at the beginning of the first book?

> Say it, no ideas but in things

In these lines, as in too many others, Williams is still an objectivist walking among people and objects that are neither informed by, nor understood in, the light of any large meanings. Even so, Williams understands and is articulate about many particulars in American life and he has many insights into it—but he sees it as a man sees his own family, close up and emotionally. If he can continue to catch America in its own language, yet dissociate himself from it in order to see it in greater fulness and in the interrelatedness of the insights he has put down in tangential fashion, he will undoubtedly have written a poem Americans will not forget.

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Exuberance in Many Ways

A WAY OF HAPPENING. By Ruth Herschberger. New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, Inc. 1948. 56 *pp.* $2.

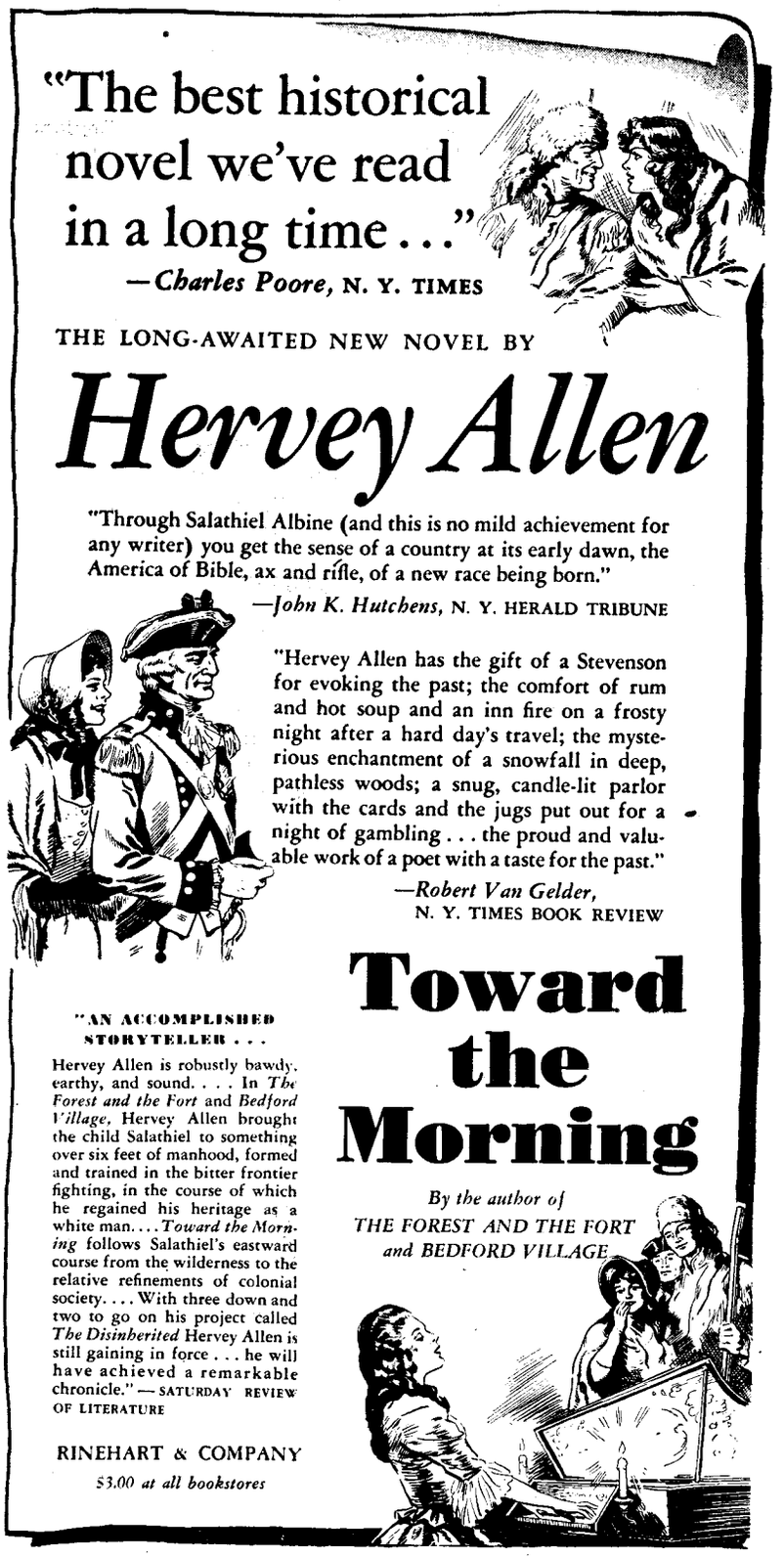
Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

PERHAPS the most striking quality of this too-long-delayed first book of poems is its exuberance. This manifests itself in many ways: in the fresh, scoured diction; the sympathetic clarity of observation, particularly of animal and vegetable shapes and textures, which clothes itself in imagery at once homely, strange, and just; the urgent rhythms, controlled, yet always on the point of bursting, like Miss Herschberger's apple blossoms, "strained — Tight in their damask case." It is a pleasure to come upon poetry as assured as this, to range from the burgeoning eroticism, all touch and taste and contour, of "A Strain of the Earth's Sweet Being," to the whimsical symbolic eroticism of "In Paneled Rooms"; to "The Virgin," those helplessly dithering yet appealing quatrains; to the loving celebrations of animals—the zebras, the snail, the minnow, the traumatized rats, the heron, the small-mouth black bass. No less impressive are certain gnomic poems — "Mentor," for example, or "Hymn to Texture"—where rhetoric and conviction combine to strike a profounder note:

> Be strange, be strong, incontinent, be glum,
> The varied village of emotion be.
> Be grave and gay, be pleasant as an ax,
> Be clever, and be crude as chastity.
>
> Be rude, and true, devise the early tear,
> Explain the emmet's laughter and be kind.
> Be sweet, and tart, expose the hobbling heart.
> When entering necessity, be blind.
>
> Be fool, be sage, be critic of the age,
> Be all the probable, the hill, the grot.
> Be bread, be fruit, and when the ugly root
> Of dying and loud crying come, be not.

This poem, "Mentor," deserves analysis which I have no space for. Here I can call attention only to the wry justice of the diction, the subtle variation of rhythm, the expertly managed tension, and the shock of inevitability (it is achieved, I suppose, by the consciously violated parallelism) released by the last two words.

Not that Miss Herschberger is always as successful as this. Strong flight risks falling, and there are some very dull thuds indeed. Coyness ("The [clinical] mercury cried Help and flew above"); solecism ("ought" for "aught," which results in a horror-combination, "had ought"); false taste ("Truce has marched in against an irksome foe, / Its little hanky flapping in the wind.") And it must be confessed that she is seriously indebted, for tone, to John Crowe Ransom and Richard Eberhart. But how venial these sins appear when one considers the book as a whole! "A Way of Happening" is a way to delight and refreshment.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AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE NEW ENGLAND POETS FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY. Edited by Louis Untermeyer. New York: Random House. 1948. 636 *pp.* $3.95.

Reviewed by NORMAN HOLMES PEARSON

NEW ENGLANDERS who find their poets collected on the basis of Louis Untermeyer's new "An Anthology of the New England Poets" may not know whether to feel pleased or embarrassed. Regionalism is a literary term they have reserved for less fortunate areas. Proud as they will certainly be of the long list of hallowed names Mr. Untermeyer has been able to include, they might have felt easier with the older classification of them simply as "American," thus indicating the dominance of American literature which they will still not willingly give up. Mr. Untermeyer's book may seem to carry with it an implied threat that their poetry is in danger of being reduced to the attention of tourists. It is at any rate a symptom of reduced awe.

Once, however, they catch a glimpse of Oscar Williams's current anthology, and find their poems regarded as little more than costume jewelry in "A Little Treasury of American Poetry," they cannot feel any way but warmly towards Mr. Untermeyer's sympathetic collection of that poetic talent which in fact gives to American verse its chief natively literary tradition. Louis Untermeyer has always loved poetry for its own sake, with a catholic interest and a happy faculty for keeping well along the fresh paths of critical evaluations without leaving all of his old friends behind.

The generous result is apparent in this excellent book of selections from New England's poetry of the seventeenth century to the present. The familiar names are here, but with their work so amply and freshly represented as to give them a renewed interest if not always a new character. There are enough familiar faces in each period to alter the group pictures. Edward Taylor (1642-1729) will increase his growing circle of admirers who recognize him as the chief American poet before Poe. Yvor Winters's praise for the poems of Jones Very (1813-1880) finds its public reward by their welcome inclusion. Mr. Untermeyer's own discovery is, I should think, John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887), whose light-hearted verse is equal to that of Holmes.

There are all sorts of New Englanders here, from the outgoing Edna St. Vincent Millay to the incoming Pennsylvania Dutchman, Wallace Stevens. It is reasonable enough to claim them all for New England, from Anne Bradstreet to Robert Lowell, and Mr. Untermeyer's is nothing if not a reasonable anthology of poetry that ought not to be forgotten.

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(Continued from page 7)

in the exhibition. But six weeks later you get Art, 1948, all over again with a different (but, alas, not too different) set of specimens. Ultimately you find yourself making frantic little marks in catalogues, and your review is a mere awarding of verbal blue ribbons. You hate yourself for this because you know you are pontificating—and the next time you send your assistant to the group show. If the artists' societies gave us triennials instead of annuals, it would be better for everybody, especially for the artists themselves.

The main problem of art-journalism, as opposed to art-criticism, is that the social and economic position of the artist is often extremely unfavorable, and this has most unfortunate results for the art as well as its practitioners. Music and painting are subject to all manner of rackets, abuses, and economic fancy-work; criticism, or, rather, the critics, can and ought to speak out against these things and use the influence of the press for their amelioration. Critics have done much less along this line than they should, but their word can be very effective when it is spoken in the right way at the right time.

Ordinarily when one talks about critics and criticism one means the critics and criticism of the daily press. There is, of course, criticism of many other kinds, and for the critic of the newspaper to function in these other ways provides extremely valuable experience for him. There is more to music and there is more to art than what happens, through sheer accident, to be offered through the concert halls and picture galleries of any city. I have found it worth while to balance the inevitable lop-sidedness of journalistic experience through college teaching, writing symphonic program notes, and, more recently, through historic research.

In my own case, straddling two fields has been peculiarly fortunate. To be sure, it tends to split one's personality, and what one learns in the one field does not help a bit in the other. Quite the contrary; the deeper I go into music and the visual arts, the less unity I see between them, and the more suspicious I grow of efforts to relate them. Speculations about the unity of the arts always end up with the idea that art is the organization of experience; hence all the arts must follow the same laws. This is like saying that, because science is the recording of observed fact, astronomy and pathology are identical. Such basic unities as there may be between the arts are very simple. They are projections of the fact that the human mind is born with a passion for order but is catapulted into a disorderly world. But once you have said that, you have said it all, and the rest is neither interesting nor important. No. Being a music critic doesn't help you to be an art critic or vice-versa. But each field provides absorbing relaxation from the other.

At a recent congress of music critics, Olin Downes made a plea for more jobs for more men on more newspapers. His point was that musical criticism is too strongly centralized. So is the entire economic setup of all the arts in this country. But there are not and will not be more jobs for journalistic specialists in any one art. Combine a few interests, and maybe you'll have a chance. The painters will say you're a good music critic and the musicians will admire your art criticism, but all of them will be right there on your doorstep when they want to get something into your paper.

Alfred Frankenstein recently returned to his position as music and art editor of The San Francisco Chronicle. *During the past year he used a Guggenheim fellowship to do research on the work of the Russian architect and painter V. A. Hartmann.*

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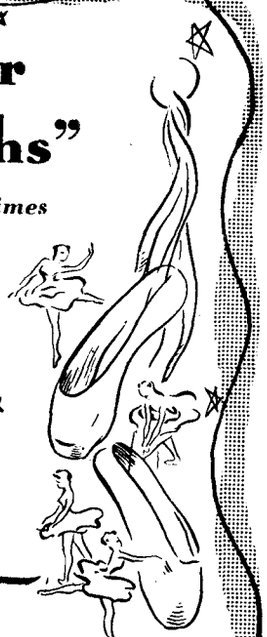

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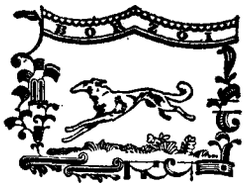

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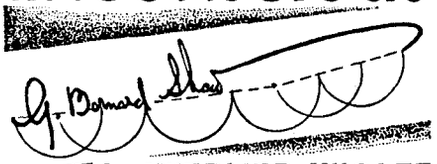

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FICTION

(*Continued from page* 12)

baron given to face creams, perfume, and sweet young men, and marries another, an Italian painter who fondles the knees of attractive women and their mothers under the dinner table; her ward, a doll-faced country cousin who is advertised as poor and defenseless but collects enough incriminating billets-doux and family secrets to set herself up for life; and so on. These people have the makings of a good story, I suppose, but it somehow misses getting told. The narrative bogs down in an episodic hodge-podge, with most of the important action recounted off-stage in snatches of diary and in letters which Mr. Weiskopf's very literate characters are interminably mailing to one another. The reader who hangs on doggedly until the end will be likely to ask himself: "So what?"

The era which the author has chosen for novelization undoubtedly is apt and vital enough to keep a regiment of chroniclers busy. Even in Mr. Weiskopf's confused rendering, the dramatic quality of the times does push through: the arrogant impotence of an absurd and doomed ruling class approaching the last agonies of the dual monarchy, the formidable rebelliousness of the subject Czechs on the threshold of liberation, the police spies, the café revolutionaries—and behind everything the fatuous, futile war, the breadlines, the maimed, the universal misery. Some of this may indeed be extracted with profit from "Children of Their Time," but the return is too meager for the effort. A more economical way to acquire the same information would be to consult any good history of the period.

The *leit-motif* of the book is the Bolshevik Revolution, which is laid, warmed, and hatched in remote Russia while Mr. Weiskopf's dramatis personae are fuming through diverse picayune intrigues halfway across Europe. It must be assumed that the author regards the Revolution as a good thing, since it is fairly worshipped by the only decent people in his story. These are a bit on the fanatic side—especially a renegade daughter of the old aristocracy who has fled to Switzerland to help emancipate the workers of the world from their chains and seriously contemplates disposing of her unborn child because it might interfere with her "Socialist responsibilities" in an age of glorious revolt. But, compared with her abominable relatives, she—and her comrade-husband, who staunchly permits his younger brother to await execution in a foul Corfu cell rather than risk jeopardizing one iota of the Cause—are models of earnest virtue. The volume concludes, in fact, on the symbolic note of the promise inherent

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THREAT OF DRAGONS *Lavinia R. Davis* (Crime Club: $2.)	Body of woman in California surf plunges young girl visitor into midst of perilous case, solved, mainly, by debonair art expert.	Art-colony background suspensefully exotic, engaging heroine gets into excitingly tight fixes, killer's identity ably concealed, and amateur detective convincing.	Above average
MURDER IS MUTUEL *Jack Dolph* (Morrow: $2.50)	Doc Connor helps police trace missing N.Y. "percentage operator" and encounters an extra cold-blooded killer.	Presents fool-proof murder plan that looks new to fiction, brisk chatter, some very narsty characters, and likable sporting-doctor sleuth.	Adequate toughie
OVER THE EDGE *Lawrence Treat* (Morrow: $2.50)	Jury foreman shocked to discover that murdered girl is old friend. He helps Lieut. Decker and Jub Freeman convict right killer.	Opening "stopper" followed by sequence of high-suspense situations, considerable emotional tensity, and efficient detecting both physical and scientific.	High grade
RUN TO DEATH *Patrick Quentin* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Peter Duluth, sightseeing in Mexico, meets sultry blonde and embarks on complicated murder case that almost finishes smart and subtle sleuth.	Mysterious Mayan ruins set stage for well-constructed, frequently turbulent, amply mystifying tale with considerable tropical atmosphere and diverting actors.	Good

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in the escape of the child from the abortionist's attentions. The Revolution may not be spreading beyond the Soviet borders just yet, but the babe in the womb will live to fight and grow toward freedom for all the world. Good times are a-comin,' presumably. In the historical context of 1917 such fond hopes might legitimately have been nourished by honest men watching the Bolsheviks at their labors from afar. But if Mr. Weiskopf has the fortitude to carry on his narrative, one can only trust that both he and his characters wax wiser with the passing years.

Vision of an All-Around Joe

THE SHINING MOUNTAINS. By Dale Van Every. New York: Julian Messner, Inc. 1948. 407 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ARTHUR C. FIELDS

MATT MORGAN was a schoolmaster's assistant when he had the vision. Clear and bright it broke upon him in the wood lot. Matt wanted to see the Shining Mountains. Somehow, somewhere, he must set his eyes upon his dream. No matter how hard he struggled, no matter how many times he was turned back, Matt knew that for him it was the Shining Mountains, and the Shining Mountains only, that would satisfy the hunger in his heart. So when he heard that Lewis and Clark were calling for volunteers, he set out after them. Wintering in sight of their encampment, Matt waited for spring, waited for his dream to come true.

Matt never does reach his Shining Mountains, which are, of course, none other than the Rockies. But before he fails he manages to get beaten by Indians, captured by Indians, robbed by Indians, saved by Indians, and worshipped by Indians. He gets loved by his woman, hated by his woman, cast off by his woman, and reunited with his woman. He gets frozen by the snows, half-drowned by floods, burned, and starved. He grows from an unknown hunter to the Lanny Budd of the Missouri, a man without whom expeditions cannot start, and without whom fights are doomed to failure. He battles his wanderlust but can never quite settle down. He discovers an overland route to the Pacific in a frenzied journey to escape from the deceit of his best friend. He hunts, he traps, he fishes, he builds houses in his spare time. In short, Matt Morgan is an all-around Joe, the young blood that made this country what it is today.

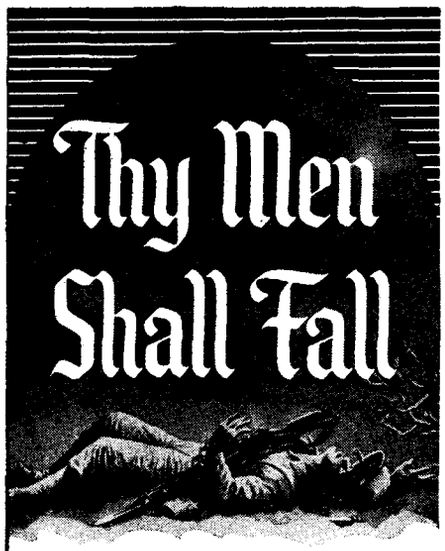
If you like your adventure deliberate and forward-moving, if you like plot strung upon plot, with chapters ending in all the suspense of a soap-opera episode, then "The Shining Mountains" should appeal to you. Matt's struggle is long and hard and plagued with adversity. Three times he sets out up the Missouri towards his dream and three times he is repulsed. But he only shakes his head clear and comes back fighting. And although Matt is understandable from his actions, it is a bit hard to swallow all of his long stubborn fight. He seems at times nothing more than a pointless mechanical toy which is being continually rewound by the author just before the running-down point is reached. Matt rarely finds himself with nothing to do, but when these moments of inaction do occur, they are rescued hastily by some fast twist of plot. As for some of the rest of the characters: Bap is pleasantly carefree as the woman-loving, fun-loving companion to Matt on his journeys; Nora is the waiting lover, whose tolerance of her mother's family brood seems, at times, almost saintly; Little Owl, the one-armed son of Hipolite, is the dogged Indian counterpart of Matt, and Joe Thorn, the old trader, continually reminds everyone that "I've had all kinds of treatment from Indians."

Mr. Van Every describes the great expanses of the West in detail. For instance, he writes of the plains:

> This flatness was never monotonous, for the prospect was perpetually varied. There were the buffalo wallows, dry and dusty now. There was in the early mornings the distant column of vaporous haze, signifying the presence beyond the horizon of another buffalo herd. There were the faraway ascending spirals of waterfowl, indicating the existence of a pond or a marsh in some fold of the plains. There were the tremendous, startling towers of elk antlers erected by successful Indians as propitiatory offerings. . . .

Occasionally, however, the language of the book grows clumsy, resulting in the inclusion of such sentences as: "He saw in her face the compassion for him that he would have thought it was for him to feel for her."

"The Shining Mountains" is an exciting, easy-to-read saga of the early days of America. It's a little late in the season for hammocks, but as the leaves of autumn fall, you may rest assured that steady, persistent Matt Morgan will be gamely struggling up the great Missouri headed for his dream, his vision, the shining Shining Mountains.



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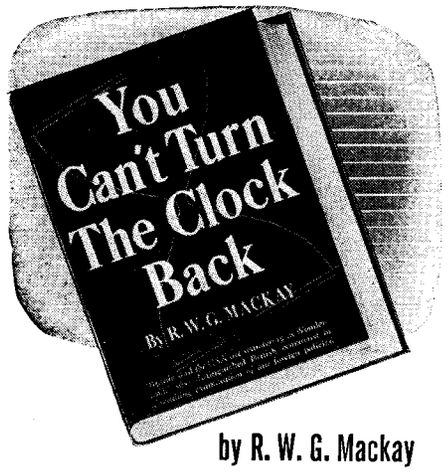

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Urahaw Island through Two Wars

HEARTHSTONES. By Bernice Kelly Harris. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1948. 273 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by RAY PIERRE

A NATIVE of North Carolina, Mrs. Harris wisely chose for her latest novel a setting she knows well and described successfully in her first novel, "Purslane," which dealt with a group of cotton farmers. Her sixth book is a simple, unpretentious story of a Confederate Army deserter and his long-suffering family. Its background is North Carolina's Roanoke River Country, a terrain she depicts with her accustomed skill, with a fine eye for regional folkways, and a thorough understanding of Southern class distinctions and prejudices.

The novel is divided into two sections, the first laid in the Civil War period, the second leaping rather abruptly to World War II. Part One introduces Caje Day, a poor but respectable cotton farmer who abandons Lee's forces to move furtively from his smokehouse hideaway to his log farmhouse, and then to the relative safety of nearby Urahaw Island. Because of her resentment against the "rich man's war," and in spite of her frequent misgivings, his wife Lalla faithfully protects Caje from prying neighbors.

Caje Day remains throughout a somewhat shadowy figure. It is Lalla who emerges as an admirable heroine, stoically accepting her bitter lot, bearing a procession of children so that her firstborn will not lack companionship, toiling over her farm work, weaving, knitting, and lovingly preparing surprises of sweet potatoes, molasses, and orchard fruit to supplement her family's meager fare.

In the second part of the novel we meet the four surviving Day daughters, now birdlike old women living in complete isolation in the snug world they have fashioned on Urahaw Island. When Bill Porter, a World War II deserter, sick in mind and body, wanders into their lives, the sisters nurse him back to health and through him resume their contact with the mainland. Thus far the story is credible enough. But Bill's love affair with Camilla's great-granddaughter Allison, who has returned to the rundown plantation, seems too contrived, too dependent on the coincidence of their reunion on the island.

It is unfortunate that Mrs. Harris allows an otherwise well-turned plot to deteriorate in its final chapters into women's magazine sentimentality.

Touch of an Evil Deed

ECHO OF EVIL. By Manuel Komroff. New York: Farrar, Straus & Co. 1948. 233 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

MR. KOMROFF'S problem is certainly profound enough: the corruptive effects of an evil deed upon all it touches. Unfortunately, his treatment of it is superficial. I do not know whether this is because he did not take it seriously enough, or because he believed that anything would do so long as he got it down. Charles Jackson did something with this same problem in his recent book "The Outer Edges" and, in his own manner, pursued it to its finest implications. Mr. Komroff's approach is all too simple and sunny; his novel has the style and penetration of a *Saturday Evening Post* suburban romance, except that in this instance things do not come out well at all, the engagement is broken, the family moves away.

The core of evil here is a woman who has spent twenty years in jail for murdering her husband. Now she is released, and comes to live with her sister for a while, until she can decide what to do. But her presence is a shadow over her sister's hitherto happy family. People talk, the social relations of the children are broken, husband and wife quarrel, and at last the sister knowingly allows the poor woman to take her life. There are a great many long and passionate speeches by all concerned, but none of these penetrate below the surface of present irritation. The whole subtle world of secret personality, the subconscious world in which this kind of problem has its roots, lies completely submerged, unexplored. Therefore Mr. Komroff's novel strikes at best the note of melodrama, and misses altogether the note of tragedy.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Mark Antony. 2. Othello. 3. Polonius. 4. Wolsey. 5. Juliet. 6. Portia. 7. Macbeth. 8. Henry IV. 9. Falstaff. 10. Iago. 11. Richard III. 12. Lady Macbeth. 13. Cleopatra. 14. Duke Orsino. 15. Katharina. 16. Ophelia. 17. Antonio. 18. Julius Caesar. 19. Lear. 20. Hamlet.

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the Phoenix Nest

GOING AFTER

MANY have been here before
me looking for blueberries.
I have seen them with tin
pails, stooping among the
bushes
As if they were milking. And by mid-
summer nightfall
Nothing but green fruit is left on the
crumpled bushes.

In my hand I have gathered blueber-
ries freshly tinged
Ink-blue by a night of sapphire and
dim star-shine.
Walking, expectant of nothing, I have
found berries
And taken a few, and left the rest on
the bushes.

MARIE GILCHRIST.

* * *

Some ironies speak for themselves. I have been reading advance galleys of the excellent "Treasury of Russian Verse" to be published this fall by Macmillan. It is edited by the distinguished Slavonic authority Avrahm Yarmolinsky. I have also been reading accounts of the death at the age of fifty-two of Alexandrovitch Zhdanov. General Zhdanov was thought to have as good a chance as Molotov of eventually succeeding Stalin.

"In the summer of 1946," writes Mr. Yarmolinsky in his introduction, "Anna Akhmatova was expelled from the Union of Soviet Writers, which is tantamount to proscription, after having been vilified in a speech by Andrey Zhdanov, a top Party official." Well, in 1942 Anna Akhmatova had written one of the finest poems produced in the Soviet Union during the late war. It is translated in this book. I quote the final lines:

It is you, Russian tongue, we must
save, and we swear
We shall give you unstained to the
sons of our sons;
You shall live on our lips, and we
promise you—never
A prison shall know you, but you shall
be free
Forever.

That's all I have to say.

* * *

From Erich August Albrecht of Newcomb College, New Orleans, La.:

> After a belated reading of Clifton Fadiman's article "What Is Left of Goethe?" [*The Nation*, CXXXIV, 1932] in connection with a bibliographical project, I am troubled by the thought that Goethe actually may mean nothing or very little to American Anglo-Saxons. The Goethe-Slayer, Mr. Fadiman, as the *Bookman* called him in 1932, may have had a change of heart since 1932, but it is to be feared that he will swing his club again next year when the celebration of the bicentennial of Goethe's birth will take place.
>
> In order to soften this possible blow and to have a fairly representative reaction of Anglo-Saxon and other non-German readers to Goethe, I should like to ask you to publish this letter in THE PHOENIX NEST. Perhaps those *SRL* readers who actively read and reread Goethe will have the kindness to let you or me know about it. Readers like myself who have Goethe in their blood, or who inhaled the Goethe *Weihrauch* over there, need not write.
>
> This is the question I'd like to be able to answer: "Is Goethe an actual force in the cultural life of America, or is he kept alive by transplanted and sentimental countrymen of his?"

* * *

I am indebted to Earle Walbridge for the following:

> Recent researches on Fourth Avenue have convinced me that 1927 was *Annus Mirabilis*. It saw the publication (private) of "Ravings in Delirium and Other Verse," by Dr. Ary Flaks, and the reprinting of "Irene Iddlesleigh" (1897), by Amanda M'Kittrick Ros (Boni and Liveright; introduction by Thomas Beer). Both of these I now own. Mr. Beer stated that "I maintain that this woman [Mrs. Ros] is solitary as the widowed hippopotamus," and that "Your mind rocks along in an amiable delirium" while reading it. I would not direct from the quiet corners of costly curiosity the titter of tainted mockery, as Mrs. Ros would (and indeed did) say; no one can deny that "Irene Iddesleigh" is a masterpiece of its kind. There is not space here to dwell on its beauties, but I cannot overlook a person whom Irene met after Oscar Otwell, the villainous tutor, had drowned himself in Afton Lake: "a female who swiftly hopped over the fence in tears."
>
> Anyway, there's also Dr. Flaks. The title-poem inquires:
>
> But what is there crawling
> And like a beast sprawling?
> It's Cerberus, the custodian of
> Hades,
> In company with his charges, the
> shades.
>
> A daring man with a rhyme, you perceive. But his *chef d'oeuvre* is

CATHERINE THE GREAT

(In memoriam of our passed sovereigns)

With Catherine the Great
A small man had little weight,
A six-footer with some in addition
Was the Empress's greatest ambi-
tion.

Her favorites she always found
In the lower ranks at a round
Among the hussars, snugly dressed,
With promontories well expressed.

(I pause here to say that this must be what Hawthorne would call a prophetic picture of Bill Eythe and his skin-tight breeches, in that Catherine the Great film in which Tallulah Bankhead played Catherine, "A Royal Scandal.")

She admired sturdy healthy people,
Had no use for her spouse—the crip-
ple
Although, herself autocratic
In love she was democratic.

So to the final stanza:

This little story is pretty
It tells of greatness and beauty,
Of an Empress very kind,
Who lower ranks did not mind.

I am reminded of Barnabe Barnes, the Elizabethan poet who wrote that eidillion. I am very grateful to Paul Nord for telling me all about eidyllia. Thomas Nash, who didn't care for Barnes, called him "a smattring pert boy, whose buttocks were not yet coole from the Grammar," and jeered that he swaggered through London in "a strange payre of Babilonian britches" (*sic*). As I noted in my original query, the word doesn't seem to be in any dictionary or literary handbook. But I'm told that it will be found in "The Reader's Encyclopedia," which Crowell will publish in October.

* * *

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* * *

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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9-25

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 757

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

Reg. U. S. Patent Office

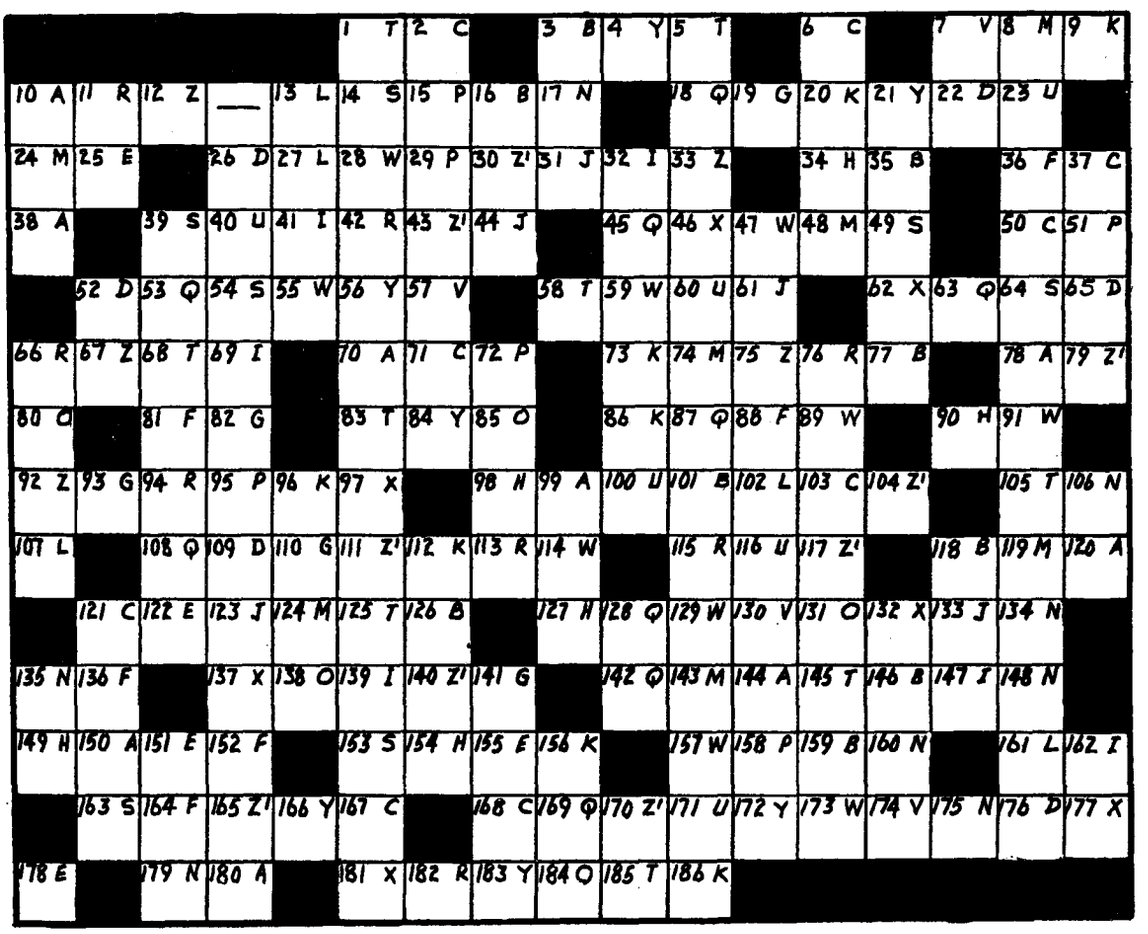
DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Comedy by Plautus, possibly basis for "The Comedy of Errors."	78 38 180 70 120 144 150 10 99
B. Large, gallinaceous birds of Central and S. America (*Crax* and allied genera).	101 146 126 118 77 16 35 3 159
C. A common mullet of the West Indies.	103 2 121 167 6 71 168 37 50
D. Son and successor of Rehoboam (Bib.).	65 26 22 52 109 176
E. Volcano, Martinique, F. W. Indies (eruption in 1902 destroyed St. Pierre).	178 25 155 151 122
F. A potential cutting (bot.).	88 164 152 36 81 136
G. Extravagant; impossible (colloq.).	82 93 110 141 19
H. Author and singer of "My Wild Irish Rose" (1860-1932).	90 98 127 154 34 149
I. Point on Lake Champlain in New York State at the Canadian border.	139 162 41 147 32 69
J. Seat of treaty, Dec. 24, 1814, ending the War of 1812.	31 61 44 133 123
K. Fragmentary things or the like.	96 73 156 9 112 186 86 20
L. Rude sleds for hauling logs (logging).	161 102 107 27 13
M. Obsolete 17th-century instrument like a large lute (music).	124 24 143 74 119 48 8
N. A variety of garnet; cinnamon stone.	148 134 175 135 106 179 160 17

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
O. Belgian painter, leader of 19th-century renaissance in Belgian painting (1787-1869).	80 138 184 85 131
P. State of fidget; a fuss; a pet (slang).	51 158 15 95 29 72
Q. Want of rectitude.	128 18 108 63 53 142 169 45 87
R. A burden or refrain in ancient sea songs.	76 113 66 42 182 94 11 115
S. Suffered violent internal excitement or commotion.	54 49 14 163 153 64 39
T. "Sugar of bamboo," valued in East Indies as a medicine.	83 105 58 145 5 1 125 185 68
U. Garment commonly worn next the skin by both sexes in classical times (Gr. antiq.).	23 116 171 60 40 100
V. To drive or move by small degrees.	130 174 7 57
W. A source of vigor (3 wds.; Bib. origin).	129 114 173 89 59 91 28 47 157 55
X. Was a fixed element or attribute.	177 97 181 137 46 132 62
Y. A Turkish policeman.	172 4 56 21 166 183 84
Z. Seaport of Hanover district, Prussia.	67 92 33 75 12
Z.[1] American painter, esp. of Breton and New England landscapes (1861-1936).	30 165 170 140 43 79 111 117 104

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the DEFINITIONS each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 10 of this issue.

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SRL RECORDINGS SECTION

IMPRESSIONS

IT IS A formula to say that the true index to a musician's ability is the way he, or she, performs Mozart. With this view I have no quarrel, save to observe that it is somewhat Olympian. Certainly, an able conductor, or other performer, of Mozart is not likely to fail in lesser music, but there is another measuring rod, of a more inclusive sort, which can be applied. I am referring to the works of Johann Strauss.

The occasion for this observation is the appearance of an album from England, bearing the imprint of London, in which Josef Krips conducts a local ensemble of no special distinction in thoroughly distinguished performances of "Roses from the South," "On the Beautiful Blue Danube," and the "Acceleration" waltz. This is not the occasion for a detailed review, but it may be noted that Krips imposes a remarkable Viennese discipline on his Anglo-Saxon players.

The accomplishment thus puts Krips in the company of Bruno Walter (who did as much with a Parisian ensemble) or Reiner (with the Pittsburgh players) or Beecham (with another English ensemble) as conductors sufficiently masters of a style to assert its superiority over any local considerations. The extent to which this constitutes a valid touchstone of leadership may be instanced, on the one hand, by those who have striven and succeeded, and those who have ventured and failed. In the first category are such additional names as Weingartner and Kleiber, Szell, Otto Klemperer, and Clemens Krauss.

But on the other hand, I have never heard a bar of Johann Strauss conducted by Toscanini, Koussevitzky, or Stokowski—and all have succumbed to that irresistible fascination—which I would care to hear a second time.

It is certainly no damning indictment of a conductor that he cannot conduct Johann Strauss, but it is an illuminating one. Recalling that neither Toscanini, nor Koussevitzky, nor Stokowski has ever excelled in the music of Schubert, I would say the probability is that Krips does. London and Vienna papers please copy.

IRVING KOLODIN, EDITOR,
SRL RECORDINGS.

OCTOBER 1948

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The Saturday Review of Recordings

Sold to the Highest Bidder

ROLAND GELATT

IF PRESENT trends are any indication, it will not be long before Parke-Bernet Galleries — New York's fashionable auction emporium —begins consigning rare records to the tender mercies of an auctioneer's hammer. To date, a Caruso Zonophone has yet to be placed in the exalted company of a first folio Shakespeare or Constable landscape, but it would seem to be only a matter of time. For, in the past decade, the business of selling rare "cut-out" (that is, cut out of the catalogue records at collector's prices has burgeoned with remarkable speed. Though Parke-Bernet has still to bestow its blessing, the cut-out business already has its A.S.W. Rosenbachs aplenty.

The ordinary garden-variety collector, who views records as a common commodity easily to be procured around the corner, is due for considerable amazement when he saunters into one of the shops which specialize in "out-of-print" discs. As he examines a wall of shelves crammed with shabby albums of varying color and format, his eye may alight on two which advertise themselves as Mozart's "Symphony No. 39" interpreted by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Felix Weingartner, and curiosity will probably compel him to see what this antediluvian electric recording is worth. On the inside of one album he finds the notation: "Early cut-out and the outstanding performance. $7.75, with one minor flaw on one side." As for the duplicate album, it reads: "First edition, $12.50." Is the unsophisticated record buyer to be blamed for registering amazement when he can easily recall the time, not so far distant, when this set listed at $3.50?

But his astonishment has only begun. Further browsing through the shelves will reveal that the Fricka-Wotan duet from Act II of "Die Walküre" (one of Wagner's dreariest stretches) as recorded by Emmi Leisner and Friedrich Schorr on two twelve-inch records can be bought for $24.75; that excerpts from "Romeo et Juliette" of Berlioz on two domestic Decca discs, each listing at 75¢ a few years ago, sell for $4.98; that the Myra Hess waxing of the Schumann piano concerto, currently in RCA Victor's catalogue at $1.25 per record, can be had in its "Rare First Edition" (referring to the original, prewar, RCA Victor pressing) for $3 per record; that the four-record set of Roy Harris's "1933" symphony now costs $16; and that Frida Leider's magnificent interpretation of the "Abscheulicher" aria from "Fidelio," a single twelve-inch record, is waiting for the enthusiast who has $14.75 to pay for it.

INFLATED prices like these stem directly from the slashing deletions made in American record catalogues during the war. Around 1940, enforced musical isolation caused RCA Victor and Columbia to place virtually every major American orchestra and concert artist under contract, with the result that only too often a superlative European waxing of the Thirties was cast aside to make room for a mediocre American product of the Forties. Though artistically injurious, this policy proved to be a financial bonanza, for the record companies were able to cash in on the mounting stream of press and radio publicity—to say nothing of that emanating from Hollywood—which was just then beginning to make music big business. Even today, with hundreds of excellent postwar European recordings added to the treasures of the 1930's, record concerns are loath to depart from the sometimes artistically disappointing policies which have dogged their efforts of recent years. Why bother with Cortot or Myra Hess when Iturbi and Levant outsell them a hundred to one? Thus reasoned the record moguls, and looking at the matter solely from a profit standpoint, who can gainsay their logic? Not so long ago, a sale of 5,000 records was considered very profitable; now, a new release has to hit the 15,000 mark before record executives can even begin to smile. And apparently it takes a well-established and well-touted musical organization or personality to lure that number of buyers.

—*From Mr. Schorr's collection.*
Schorr as Wotan—"A duet for $24.75."

SO, FOR the forseeable future, recordings of the Boston Pops will be in the ascendant while those of the Czech Philharmonic will be on the decline, and music lovers whose taste for Smetana favors Prague rather than the Hub may very well have to join the ranks of cut-out record buyers. Admittedly, the outlook is not nearly as black in 1948 as it was in 1946. Many laudable restorations have been made to the catalogues, as evidenced by the listing on the following page. But the bald economics of the situation still point to an increasing "morgue" of record deletions.

In the carefree prewar days, most

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cut-out recordings would have gone begging on bargain counters for something like 19¢ apiece. *Autres temps, autres moeurs.* Today, almost anything which is unavailable through normal channels commands a premium. Logically, there is nothing wrong with such a situation. The law of supply and demand operates with inexorable drive, and just as the scarcity of first folios inflates their value, so too does the price of Leider "Abscheulicher" records rise with their increasing unavailability. Unfortunately, the demand for both these rarities is often of a spurious and Philistine nature. Many purchasers of a first folio would be found yawning by the end of page 12, just as many possessors of the Leider disc would be unable to distinguish it in a blindfold test from a duplicate version by, say, Rose Bampton. It is the label which counts. How else can one explain the $9.75 asked for an old recording by the Roths of a Haydn quartet, distinguished chiefly by its quaint Edison labels?

The blatantly fad characteristic of this cut-out collecting boom is seen to best effect in the sphere of popular music. Here prices seem quite out of all proportion. A ten-inch record made by Tallulah Bankhead in England some fifteen years ago will find ready buyers at $35, and a song medley from Noel Coward's "Nymph Errant"—a recording of similar vintage, sung by Gertude Lawrence,—easily commands $25. These are, to be sure, recondite items worthy of premium. But what of the numerous discs made by Fred Astaire for Brunswick, which until a few years back were plentifully available in any record store for half a dollar? Today, they will cost at least $2 and may go as high as $7.50, with similar figures holding for deleted discs of Bing Crosby, Cole Porter, and Noel Coward. Mention should be made

here also of the flourishing trade in imported English and French pressings of American jazz records no longer manufactured in their country of origin. For $1.57 customers can now buy a Louis Armstrong disc pressed in Hayes, Middlesex, which once could be had for 35¢ from Camden, N. J.

Since most of these items are marketed for the "lunatic fringe" of record collectors, the steady buyer of regular releases need not concern himself. Not, that is, until he is seized with an unmanageable craving for a particular cut-out album. Then he is in for trouble. Suppose, for example, that he finds life incomplete without the Ravel Quartet, and that, further, currently available versions impress him as worse than none. Turning to a record authority, he will learn that the finest interpretations are those of the Pro Arte and Capet Quartets, both recorded in France during the early 1930's and both deleted from current catalogues, but when he prices used copies of these albums in a shop dealing in cut-out records, he will discover that they cost, respectively, $14 and $16.

One obvious way to pull the props out from the rare-record "racket" would be to reinstate to catalogues all recordings for which there is the slightest demand. But though obvious, such a method would also be blatantly impractical. Bitter experience has demonstrated that the hue and cry for an unavailable recording often bear little relation to actual dollars-and-cents sales. The much-talked-of "Gurrelieder" is a case in point. Though this album has sold for as much as $150, the current price in a leading New York cut-out store is $64.75 (about $4.60 per record). Several "Gurrelieder" recordings have been sold by this store (at the above price), but each sat on the shelf for two or three months before a bona fide buyer came along. Such information naturally tends to dampen any desire on the part of RCA Victor to reissue the Schönberg work. However, to balance this apparent lack of cash interest in "Gurrelieder," there is Columbia's heartening experience in reissuing the "Chants d'Auvergne." From all preliminary reports, the much demanded Madeleine Grey discs are doing very nicely.

David Hall, lately graduated to the rank of record tycoon, has suggested a plan which might ease the cut-out situation without impoverishing, at the same time, every record company in the land. His suggestion is to classify records under three headings and sell them at different prices. Class A records would be those which sell upwards of 5,000 copies a year—the staples of the record industry like Beethoven symphonies, Tchaikovsky ballet music, Rachmaninoff piano concertos. These would retail at prices now current, viz. $1.25 for a twelve-inch disc. Class B would consist of a so-called "Connoisseur's Catalogue," composed of recordings less in demand which nevertheless sell anywhere from 500 to 5,000 copies yearly. In this category would be placed such items as the Pro Arte Ravel Quartet recording referred to above, Elisabeth Schumann's lieder discs, the Weingartner "Hammerklavier" transcription. To compensate for slower turnover, these

(*Continued on page* 55)

Silver Lining

Here is the bright side to the often doleful picture of cut-out recordings. Columbia and RCA Victor have recently restored many erstwhile deletions to their current catalogues, of which the following list is a cross-section.

COLUMBIA

Mascagni: "Cavalleria Rusticana." La Scala Opera. Album OP-7.
Puccini: "Tosca." La Scala Opera. Album OP-6.
Purcell: English Music Society Vol. I. Album 315.
All the Mercury Theatre albums.
All the Add-A-Part recordings.

RCA VICTOR

Bach: Concerto No. 5 in F Minor. Edwin Fischer. Album 786.
Beethoven: Violin Concerto. Fritz Kreisler. Album 325.
Bloch: Concerto Grosso. Curtis Chamber Ensemble. Album 563.
Brahms: Quintet. Op. 88. Budapest & Hobday. Album 466.
Chopin: Ballades. Cortot. Album 399.
Chopin: Mazurkas. Rubinstein. Albums 626 and 656.
Dvorak: "New World Symphony." Czech Philharmonic. Album 469.
Mozart: Quintet in G Minor. Pro Arte & Hobday. Album 190.
Saint-Saëns: Concerto No. 4. Cortot. Album 367.
Schubert: Sonata in A Major. Kreisler and Rachmaninoff. Album 107.
Strauss: "Sinfonia Domestica." Ormandy. Album 520.
Wagner: "Die Walküre," Act II. Klose, Lehmann, Melchior. Album 582.
Music of the Rennaissance. Max Meili. Album 495.
Art Songs, Vol. II. Povla Frijsh. Album 789.

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Don't Shoot the Pianist

IRVING KOLODIN

THE FOLKLORE of music contains many old wives' tales, but none so familiar as the one about oboe players being crazy. The basis for this canard is the mechanism of the instrument—two thin vibrating reeds held in the mouth, operated by a compressed stream of air from the players' lungs. Even a scientific basis has been ascribed to the contention, the thesis being that long years of forcing the air through the reeds may induce high blood pressure, and, eventually, might affect the player's mental faculties.

Note well the qualifying "may" and "might." The plain truth is that much too much pity has been expended on such comparative fortunates as oboists, and not nearly enough on their much less well-favored brethren of the keyboard. Have you ever heard of an oboist failing to appear at a concert hall because of amnesia? Have you ever read of a famous violinist pounding his left hand with a hammer because it wouldn't respond as he desired? Or has it even been necessary to post a warning: "Don't shoot the marimba player—he's doing the best he can"? But all of these things are familiar in the realm of those who devote their lives to the obviously impossible task of creating color from the black and white of the piano keyboard.

Much of this I would attribute to the simplest source of unhappiness known to man—sheer, mean, plain frustration. Merely to contemplate the huge bulk of a concert grand is to know what is meant by an immovable object. Since no pianist has yet generated what might be described as irresistible force, it is evident that the favorite speculation of physicists will not be tested in music. The immovable object shall and will prevail.

It is immovable to the extent, really, that virtually no pianist actually performs on the instrument with which he practises. Can you imagine Heifetz practising all summer on a Strad, then undertaking a tour in which he would play on fifty different violins in fifty different cities? Even the inside player on the last desk of the second violin section (the orchestral equivalent of the Forgotten Man) tucks under his chin a possession which he fondles lovingly as his own —while a Serkin, or a Rubinstein, or a Casadesus operates on an instrument belonging to a piano company, which he knows only as a number.

For those of the uninitiate who may not know what the troubled life of the piano virtuoso is like, some explanation may be in order. Virtually the only famous artist who plays consistently on one and the same instrument is Vladimir Horowitz. He not only journeys about with it everywhere he plays, but allows no other virtuoso to use it between concerts, or when he is out of the country. Otherwise, most players, even of high rank, use one of the several hundred pianos the Steinway Company has cached in concert halls all over the country. If they are not Steinway users, they may be Baldwin users, a company which offers, as inducement, the transport of an instrument to some cities. But, even so, they will rarely have the same instrument all the time, or even the one on which they practise at home!

In the busy mill of concert-giving in New York, pianos are so much grist for the wheels, trundling back and forth between the warehouse, Steinway's basement, and the concert stages. "Picking a piano" is one of the delicate chores every recitalist performs before he plays, and in the underground cavern that occupies a full block from 57th to 58th streets beneath the Steinway Building, as much tender care is expended as by a *sommelier* seeking out the perfect bottle of a rare vintage in the caves of Moquin.

On a clear day, when the wind is in the right direction, one can discern in the corner the Horowitz piano, blanketed like a stabled thoroughbred, clothed in silence. Around it in solemn rows stand the lesser public properties, to be tested and thumped, chorded and arpeggiated. Formally, they are known by numbers—something like 2547986D—and those who have favorites ask for them by number from year to year. But informally, among the inner circle, one hears whispers of the "Rubinstein" piano, the "Serkin" piano, the "Casadesus" piano. Some in the second rank of virtuosi have even been known to go to hear a rival play, not to appraise his art, or savor his interpretations, but merely to audition the piano.

WHILE such gossip doesn't get into Winchell, the virtuoso set has its own rumor factory producing such juicy items as: "Did you know that Feigenbaum and 2547986 have phhft? This season he's using 2547985." Or they might pass along the story of the celebrated virtuoso who uses a Baldwin in public, but insists on a Steinway when he records.

Mention has been made of the second violinist who tucks his fiddle under his chin, proud in the possession of something indisputably his own. It is an additional source of frustration for a pianist that, virtually alone among musical performers, he has no direct physical possession of his instrument. The singer, of course, is the most personal of all in this respect. His instrument is himself, and it accompanies him wherever he goes. It is as much a part of him as his nose or his kneecap, a thoroughly individual asset.

In descending order, there are the instrumentalists who have primary, secondary, or tertiary relations with the mechanisms they operate. The primaries I would nominate as violinists,

Artur Rubinstein . . . hands may be flung high.

William Kapell . . . in the direction of the music.

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cellists, or other string players who directly control the sounds they produce with little intervening metal. They have the feel of music in their hands, as the singer has it in his throat.

In secondary succession are the lip and finger performers—the winds of all sorts, from oboists to bass trombonists, who have one personal relationship with the instrument (the lips) and one impersonal one (the metal mechanism controlled by the fingers). Such a performer—especially hornists, trombonists, and clarinetists—are in equal proportion, artists, mechanics, and plumbers. They have the initial responsibility of functioning smoothly in any ensemble of which they are a part; they must keep their instruments oiled, greased, and otherwise friction-free, and the spittle that accumulates in tubes, valves, and pistons is a natural enemy of smooth execution.

AT A degree removed from these are merely the finger and ear men—percussionists, cymbal players, xylophonists, even glockenspielers. The noisemakers with which these are concerned are wholly mechanized, but with some degree of individual control. The percussionist judges the pitch by applying his ear to the taut drum-head, absorbing some personal air contact thereby—and his corrections are made manually. The cymbalist has nothing more than two pot-covers in his hand, but he can damp their vibrations by pressing the instruments to his body.

Alone among all of these, the pianist has no more affinity with his instrument than a motorman with a street cab. He applies pressure to a device, which in turn actuates another device, following which something contacts a taut string. If he seeks to limit the vibrations he has set in motion, he is reduced to the indignity of using his FEET, only a mere step away (and no sad kind of pun is intended) from the organist.

Is it any wonder, then, that the pianist is humbled to the kind of awkward, insipid, and thoroughly inartistic contortions depicted by the adjoining illustrations? Lacking a true physical identity with his instrument, he must falsify it by chair-adjustments, handkerchief wipes over the keyboard, solicitating sounding of chords. But once these preliminaries are disposed of, he is reduced to any manual means he can imagine to make the ugly, implacable thing a part of himself.

TO my mind, among present-day pianists the most convincing technique for this belongs to Rubinstein. He betrays no fear of the ogre as he approaches it, rather a wary kind of self-dependence. He does not goad the keyboard, nor does he disdain it. Mindful that a barking dog will bite no one who displays a similar boldness, he pretends a confidence which, I am sure, he doesn't possess, intimidating both instrument and audience with his bland competence. But one can note in the tilt of his head, the arch of his eyebrows, that he is ever on guard against the untoward, prepared to abandon the whole thing the moment it threatens to explode in his face.

At a point 180° removed is such a virtuoso as Simon Barer, whose fabulous fingers have fathered more than one anecdote. Such as the one which concerns the Schumann Toccata. In his presence one day a phonograph repertory man was bewailing the nuisance that this piece was too short for a double-sided ten-inch disc, too long for a single-sided twelve-inch disc. "How much time for twelve-inch side?" he asked. "Four minutes, fifteen seconds," he was told. "Good," he responded. "I play it in four minutes ten seconds." RCA Victor No. 14263 is the proof of this.

Lacking the sangfroid of Rubinstein or the perspired proficiency of Barer is the intense school of contemporary young pianists represented by William Kapell. Whether it is crowned by the crew cut of Eugene List or the aggressive cowlick of Kapell, this variety of performer seems to regard the piano bench as a mere air strip from which to take off. The high, level approach to the keyboard is disdained in favor of a dive-bombing technique in which all the angles—both of approach and departure—are precipitous. One scarcely need be able to hear what is being played, for the visual representation, on the whole, is, of course, much more graphic.

Perhaps the most affecting figure of a pianist now before the public is the Chopin specialist Alexander Brailowsky. His frail body, as he assumes the attitude of attack, is hunched over the keyboard almost as a crescent, testifying to incredible weary man-hours of practice to precede his present perfection. But any suspicion of weakness is soon put at rest, as he plunges through etude after etude, prelude after prelude, books of polonaises, mazurkas, and impromptus, topped off by a sonata or two. Like the frail-looking Vernon Gomez, who threw the swiftest left-handed fast ball of his baseball era, Brailowsky has organized everything in his wispy body for one consuming purpose—to play the piano.

I HAVE omitted such a pianist as Horowitz, since this page could scarcely encompass the massive spread of his two hands—like as many steam shovels—over the keyboard, or Oscar Levant, whose antipathy for the instrument is only exceeded by his urge to master it. Similarly, a complete catalogue would have to include Serkin, Arrau, Casadesus, Schnabel, and Moiseiwitsch, all of whom aspire, apparently, to make one believe that the mailed fist in the velvet glove is the one sure way to conquest of the keyboard.

As for the lady players, that is another whole subject, not to be included as an afterthought. This study, after all, is dedicated to pianists. The pianiste is a separate breed, dangerous in its native lair, but suitable for domestication under some conditions. It may only be remarked, finally, that should the government ever get around to licensing musical performers, as has sometimes been suggested, there would have to be two categories established: owner-operators, such as violinists, cellists, clarinetists, and the rest—and mere musical chauffeurs of rented properties, such as pianists.

Alexander Brailowsky . . . proper posture a help.

Simon Barer . . . ninety-nine per cent perspiration.

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Reviews of the Month

Thanks to a bit of bracing from across the ocean, the month offers such interests as Vaughan Williams's "Mass in G minor" and Debussy's "Iberia," a new "Symphonie Fantastique" of Berlioz and Igor Stravinsky's "Symphonie des Psaumes." However, domestic sources offer such neat parallels as Vaughan Williams's "Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis," Debussy's "Damoiselle Elue," and Stravinsky's "Danses Concertantes."

Debussy, Early and Late

DEBUSSY: *"Iberia." Charles Münch and L'Orchestre de la Societé du Conservatoire de Paris.* (English Decca album 51, $7.35.)

"La Damoiselle Elue." Bidu Sayao, soprano, Rosalind Nadell, contralto, the Women's Chorus of the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. (Columbia album 761, $4.75.)

Just about the most important twenty years of Debussy's career are delimited by these two issues—the "Damoiselle Elue" of 1887 and "Iberia" of 1909. It is a rare study in stylistic evolution to note the Wagnerian influences in the earlier vocal work replaced in the later orchestral one by devices purely Debussyian. And one can really study them here, for each recording is a superb technical accomplishment, and an interpretation to be respected.

Münch's feeling for "Iberia" is rather more familiar, from his recent concert-hall performances of it, and of anticipated effect in this recording. Delicacy and balance are its notable elements, with decidedly more of the dream-world effect of the music than one hears from the American recordings of Barbirolli and Reiner, or the air versions of Toscanini. I have heard it complainingly said of such things as Münch's "Daphnis and Chloe" and Ansermet's "Petrouchka" that English Decca is "unfair" to local competition because it rejects more than a usual number of sides in producing its outstanding results. If so, this must be a product of truly underhand methods, for it is orchestrally magnificent. The unfamiliar, charming "Berceuse Heroique" fills the odd side.

By the measure of baseball rather than cricket, the Philadelphia product is also of high quality. A beautiful sonority has been generated in the Academy, transferred to Columbia grooves with more than customary mellowness and sheen. Miss Sayao is a reasonable, if not ideal choice, for this assignment; I quarrel not with any musical thing she does, but somewhat with the flat, nasal quality of her French. Ormandy has rarely done anything on discs with the sustained quality of this interpretation, and the instrumental-vocal balance is splendid throughout.

English Elder Statesman

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *"Mass in G minor." The Fleet Street Choir, conducted by T. B. Lawrence.* (English Decca album 57, $7.35.)

"Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis." The Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. (Columbia album X-300, $3.50.)

The chariness of American distributors of English Decca records with pertinent information about its products is a special liability in an unfamilar work of this sort. We have discovered that it was written as long ago as 1923, and first performed in Westminster Abbey, though it seems intimate in size for that vast area. Some authorities have assigned its source to a work of similar scope by Byrd. However, that is but the beginning of understanding, and it is much too fine a work to suffer such a needless handicap in its quest for a public.

Poulenc—"entertains modestly and with snickers rather than guffaws."

As noted, it is an *a capella* creation, obviously using the modal scale of traditional church writings. To the credit of the English master, he has preserved the austerity of his medium with no sacrifice of vocal interest or musical variety. Solo and group voices are alternated with superb resourcefulness and with no suggestion of artificiality. In all, it is a triumphant affirmation of Vaughan Williams's stature as Britain's elder statesman of music, and an illuminating addition to his recorded literature.

Mitropoulos's "Fantasia" is something less than that, not so much for the rather dry style he applies to it, as for the unsuitability of his orchestra's strings for music of this richly tapestried texture. Acoustics can be a considerable part of a musical work's effect, and the Minneapolis thinness is a definite detriment to Vaughan Williams. It compares unfavorably with the Barbirolli-Hallé Orchestra version of recent months, which should be a priority project for Victor when it gets around to doing business with other HMV artists than Beecham.

Tongue in Cheek

POULENC: *"Concerto in D minor." Arthur Whittemore and Jack Lowe, pianists, with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting the RCA Victor Orchestra.* (RCA Victor album 1235, $4.75.)

Fifteen years and a war have passed since I heard this music for the first time in Venice when it had its premiere there in 1932, but the tongue Poulenc put so firmly in his cheek when he was laboring on it is still doggedly there. It is a kind of an audible what-not stuck in the corner of a room in Time, cluttered with small knick-knacks of musical fancy from here and there.

What is remarkable, however, is that the pieces all fit together to make a rather harmonious *objet d'art*, if nothing one would call a real piece of furniture. One marvels at so much craftsmanship applied to so small a purpose, but it does entertain — modestly and with snickers rather than guffaws. Mitropoulos has an extraordinary hand for music of this order, meshing the gears slickly, solicitous equally for influences of the conservatory and the cabaret. Whittemore-Lowe are one of the smoother operators among musical tandems, and though the tone they spread is more than a bit too resonant for some of these patterns, the spirit is there.

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Bartlett or Sickle

SATIE: *"Three Pieces in the Form of a Pear." Robert and Gaby Casadesus, piano.* (Columbia album 753, $3.)

To appreciate this quirky and individualistic music, one should know at least the irreducible facts about the composer. He dates between Fauré and Debussy in the history of French music, with a definite affinity for the latter rather than the former, whatever may be indicated by chronology. And to unravel the mystery of the title, it may be noted as Satie's whimsical reply to Debussy's criticism of a previous piece, that it was musically interesting but lacking in form. He retired to his writing desk, presently to emerge with these three pieces—"in the form of a pear."

Satie neglected to specify whether the pear was a Bartlett or a Sickle, but the wholly independent music is artful, idiomatic, and individual. It is, to my knowledge, the first American-recorded Satie since the "Gymnopédie" of some years back by Stokowski and Koussevitzky, and a considerably better musical product. The Casadesus duo is evidently devoted to the subject matter, which it performs with illuminating clarity. The pieces themselves—which would be accepted without any further question were they titled, merely, "Sarabande," "Habanera," "Intrada," or whatever—suffer from Satie's consciously clever description, but need not be held to account therefore. Certainly they belong in any comprehensive library, or in the collection of anyone not opposed to fresh experiences.

IRVING KOLODIN.

Stravinsky Psalter

STRAVINSKY: *"Symphony of Psalms." London Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir conducted by Ernest Ansermet.* (English Decca album 52, $7.)

"Danses Concertantes" and "Scherzo à la Russe." RCA Victor Chamber Orchestra conducted by the composer. (RCA Victor album 1234, $4.75.)

The "Symphony of Psalms" embraces, notably in its second movement, elements of Bach style and of other polyphonists. Yet this masterly choral symphony, in over-all effect, is like nothing else in music. Stravinsky has distilled from old masters the timeless, the principles as valid now as they ever were, and he expresses them in terms of his epoch and his own high inspirations. The striking initial chord, for example, is based on a simple combination of tones, the minor triad, which has served composers as one of their commonest devices for centuries. Transformed by new disposition, doubling, and instrumentation, it is now incredibly new and beautiful. While other musicians argue that dissonance is now a "must" to distinguish our music from that of the past, Stravinsky, who never shuns dissonance where it is appropriate, goes his way unperturbed by such rationalizations, ringing changes on the conventional concords.

—Pablo Picasso.

Igor Stravinsky's "unruly woodwinds strive desperately to go astray."

When he achieves such a metamorphosis of the old, he appropriately makes the most of it—of his *trouvaille*, as he calls it, his "find." The peremptory first chord of the "Symphony of Psalms," thus, recurs as punctuation at several places in the opening movement. The unruly woodwinds strive desperately to go astray, but the chord now and again injects a stern "no," bringing them back to the starting point. The other movements, too, are studded with this kind and other kinds of inspiration, and with equally solemn rhetoric. The sentiment is profoundly religious—but not religious in an escapist way. It is faith trying to survive in face of wordly distraction, evil, and conflict—struggling with these adversaries until finally we arrive at the resigned serenity of the slow peroration where the music looks toward the future in a way that remotely suggests to me the inevitable close of a Chaplin film, when he hopefully walks towards the horizon up the macadam road.

Ernest Ansermet gave the premiere of the "Symphony of Psalms" in 1930. Until Stravinsky settled in this country, the Swiss conductor was his close and faithful associate, and undoubtedly has greater insight into the composer's intentions than almost any other conductor. Even so, he seems to have formed a few ideas of his own about the music, and I have had occasion to observe recently that he remains, sentimentally or otherwise, attached to some of Stravinsky's earlier notions of interpreting his works. Undoubtedly Ansermet was with Stravinsky when the composer made these earlier judgments, and may even have been instrumental in their formulation. But Stravinsky constantly grows and renews himself, and understandably modifies his ideas as to tempo and such after hearing any given work of his repeatedly. Both the printed score and Stravinsky's own early Columbia recording indicate a faster tempo for the opening movement of the "Symphony of Psalms" than Ansermet's, which may conceivably have been what Stravinsky wanted when the work had its premiere, but which seems pale now that we have been introduced to the faster, more incisive approach to the movement. This movement also, in the Ansermet recording, falls apart at the oboe solo after the first section of choral singing, owing to faulty attack and exaggeration of the breath commas. In the second movement, the niceties of instrumental phrasing are ignored in the fugal exposition, and when the chorus comes in with a new theme to create a double fugue, the entrances of the original theme in the orchestra are obscured. Incidentally, if you don't know the work you may have difficulty finding your way around because the movements (which are played without pause) are not indicated on the labels, nor are the numbers of the Latin psalms given.

Modern resources of reproduction and a chorus that sings more in tune than in the early Columbia recording, as well as Ansermet's surgically clean conducting, favor the Decca album—at least until early next year, when the new version Stravinsky has just made is due for issue. The current appearance of "Danses Concertantes" under Stravinsky's baton is enough in itself to make one look forward to it. All the subtle details of this exquisite little gem for chamber orchestra—the alternate motoriness, humor, tenderness—receive precise values in the performance. It is especially a delight after having heard "Danses Concertantes" massacred so often by the inept, under-rehearsed orchestra Ballet Russe employs for Balanchine's ballet of the same name, through which the music is almost exclusively known to us. "Scherzo à la Russe," a light, amusing piece which was written for Paul Whiteman and which is eminently Russian in its humor, occupies the last side of the album.

ARTHUR V. BERGER.

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Recordings Reports on Classical Releases

See Page 57 for Pop Releases

WORK, PERFORMER, DATA	REPORT
Bach: "Prelude and Fugue in A minor" (Liszt). Byron Janis, piano. RCA Victor 12-0379, $1.25.	A notable debut on discs for Janis, a young American with a musician's feeling for his material, as well as the virtuosity to express it. Since the old version of Eileen Joyce is no longer available, this is particularly welcome.
Beethoven; "Symphony No. 7." Anatole Fistoulari conducting the National Symphony Orchestra. EDA album 55, $11.55.	Slogging Beethoven, heavy in accent and spirit. What illusion of quality there is in the performance is owing to the reproduction, which is splendidly sonorous. A good new No. 7 would be worth having, but this is not it.
Berlioz: "Symphonie Fantastique." Eduard van Beinum conducting the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. EDA album 56, $13.65.	Another step forward in the phonographic history of the "Fantastique," from the first studio-tight Weingartner, through the delicate Rodzinski, the imposing Bruno Walter, and the recent robust Monteux, this is easily the best-sounding of them all. However, I find Van Beinum's effects a little too calculated, lacking naturalness and flow. Since Münch is certain to do this work when he takes direction of the Boston Symphony, and his performance is the best I have ever heard, patience will be rewarded. So far as the orchestral effects in the "March to the Gallows" and the "Witches Sabbath" are concerned, Victor has a high standard to challenge.
Boyce: "The Song of Momus to Mars." Roy Henderson, baritone, and Eric Gritton, piano. EDA M. 583, $1.05.	A delicacy from the eighteenth century, served with fine skill by Henderson. The style is lively, the enunciation exceptional. Vaughan Williams's lyric setting of "Orpheus with his Lute" is a bonus side of an uncommon record.
Brahms: "Academic Festival" overture. Serge Koussevitzky conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor 12-0377, $1.25.	What the implications of the inscription on the label—"Recording dedicated by Dr. Koussevitzky to the Bicentennial Anniversary of Princeton University"—may be, I can't say: but I can say that the playing lacks zest and bounce, even of a Brahmsian kind. Nothing notable about the recording, either.
Bruch: "Kol Nidre." Gregor Piatigorsky, cello, with the Philadelphia Orchestra directed by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia 12882, $1.25.	To strike a balance between the laconic and the lachrymose in this music is no easy task and Piatigorsky's preference for the former rather misses the point of the whole thing. Artful playing, but nothing like the old Casals in gravity or weight of sound.
Chopin: "Barcarolle." Artur Rubinstein, piano. RCA Victor 12-0378, $1.25.	A rather tempestuous boat ride, this, though skipper Rubinstein steers a straight enough course. Since I also disliked the venerable Gieseking disc, maybe there is something about the music which is anti-phonographic. Clear piano.
Elgar: "Pomp and Circumstance" marches. London Symphony Orchestra directed by Warwick Braithwaite. London album 23, $5.25.	Imposing ceremonials, directed by Braithwaite in a mood of controlled vigor. The famous No. 1 is superbly phrased, the rich textured writing faithfully rendered by ffrr techniques. Nos. 2, 3, and 4 of the set are included.
Gershwin: "An American in Paris." Leonard Bernstein conducting the RCA Victor Orchestra. RCA Victor album 1237, $3.50.	The most careful analysis, to date, on records of a Gershwin work, and rather creditable for his orchestration. Bernstein evokes a singularly sweet feeling in the blues strain, and the contrasts of the walking music are anything but pedestrian. Also, be it noted, the tuba solo on the final side is really audible in this recording.
Handel: "Sonata in C minor." Robert Bloom, oboe, and Earl Wilde, piano. RCA Victor 12-0380, $1.25.	Bloom's oboe tone is a rather impersonal thing—fine in an orchestra, but a little lacking in color for solo work. Result: a dryish performance of a work much more graceful than he projects.
Liszt: "Les Preludes." Enrique Jorda conducting L'Orchestre de la Societé du Conservatoire de Paris. EDA album 54, $5.25.	English Decca's assembly-line production shows its standard characteristics here, but Liszt requires more imaginative treatment to be Lisztenable these days.
Mozart: "Impresario" and "Idomeneo" overtures. Boyd Neel conducting the National Symphony Orchestra. EDA 1410, $2.10.	A valuable pairing, if neither performance is the equal of others in the phonographic past. Fine sound.
Purcell: "Sonata in G minor." Frederick Grinke, violin, and Arnold Goldsborough, piano. EDA 1404, $2.10.	Quiet, suave-toned violin by Grinke, admirably companioned by Goldsborough, the arranger of the work. Eloquent pre-Handel, which some concert-givers would do well to investigate.
Purcell: "I See She Flies Me," etc. Astra Desmond, contralto, with Harold Craxton, piano. EDA K. 1397, $2.10.	Along with Alsop and Ferrier, Desmond is one of a new school of fine English singers. Ingratiating vocal work, in a difficult style. The four-part disk includes "On the Brow of Richmond Hill," "Retired from Any Mortal's Sight" ("King Richard II"), and "Sylvia, Now Your Scorn Give Over," which is scarcely longer than the title.
Tchaikovsky: "Waltzes." Vitya Vronsky and Victor Babin, duo pianists. Columbia album 760, $6.	A melange of Tchaikovskyian ¾, arranged by Babin. Titles are scarcely necessary, for the five included are all favorites. Very musical playing, which might have been better expended on more substantial repertory.
Vieuxtemps: "Concerto in A minor." Jascha Heifetz, violin, with the London Symphony conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. RCA Victor album 1240, $3.50.	Exemplary attention by Heifetz to a composer whose only other exponent (in the D minor concerto) is also named Heifetz. The playing is unquestioning, uncompromising, and unapproachable in musicianship and facility. Sargent does his work well, and the recording is an auspicious augury for the other things done by Heifetz in England last year.
Wagner: "Five Songs." Eileen Farrell, soprano, with Leopold Stokowski conducting his orchestra. RCA Victor album 1233, $4.75.	A complete issue of the Wesendock songs, and Stokowski's second direction of them (he collaborated with Traubel in her incomplete RCA album). His feeling for the material is uncommonly acute, and he has transmitted it to Farrell in a remarkable way. Though one occasionally wishes a little more coloration of the text, she vocalizes the line superbly, and in complete agreement with the conductor's intentions. One of the last RCA recordings made in 1947, it is notable for fulness of sound and aural perspective. IRVING KOLODIN.

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Postwar Jazz in France

WAR YEARS were a real trial for jazz lovers in France. The Germans had forbidden all music composed or performed by Americans, and the records by French bands, even if some tried to play real jazz, could hardly make up for the absence of Armstrong, Ellington, Fats Waller, Count Basie, and other jazz great. Since the liberation, American recordings are again issued regularly and a new series, the "Anthologie du Hot Club de France," has been created. This anthology will include several hundred famous jazz classics which are no longer available otherwise, some of which American collectors have subscribed for. The most important records already issued in the anthology are: "Cemetery Blues"/ "Any Woman's Blues" and "St. Louis Blues" / "Cold in Hand Blues" by Bessie Smith (Columbia LF 217 & 218), "New Orleans Stomp" / "Chattanooga Stomp" by King Oliver (Columbia LF 225), "I'm Coming Virginia" / "The Whiteman Stomp" by Fletcher Henderson (Columbia LF 227), "Original Jelly Roll Blues" / "Doctor Jazz" and "Georgia Swing" / "Kansas City Stomp" by Jelly Roll Morton (Gramophone DA 4986 & 4987), "Jack the Bellboy" / "Central Avenue Breakdown" by Lionel Hampton (Gramophone K 8646), "Warm Valley" / "In a Mellotone" by Duke Ellington (Gramophone K 8708).

On the other hand, two French companies, Blue Star and Swing, have taken every opportunity to record American musicians who have come to Paris since the end of the war. The first group to be recorded was the nucleus of Don Redman's band which played in Paris during December 1946 and January 1947. The best sides were those made for Blue Star which were issued in two albums of six sides each, the first jazz albums ever sold in France.

Next came Don Byas whose album includes the following numbers: "Dynamo," How High the Moon," "Red Cross," "Walkin' Around," "Cement Mixer," and "Laura." The band is as follows: Don Byas (tenor sax), Peanuts Holland (trumpet), Billy Taylor (piano), Buford Oliver (drums), all from Redman's band, and two French musicians, Tilché (guitar) and Bouchety (bass). The performances are in a most modern style. The first four sides have a kind of bebop flavor, although they are in no way typical bebop music, such as Dizzy Gillespie's or Charlie Parker's. Most of the solo work is done by Byas and Billy Taylor. Both are very inspired, especially Byas, who thinks that these records are among the best he has ever made. The rhythm section is very good, thanks to Buford Oliver whose style is similar to that of Big Sid Catlett. The most remarkable side of all is probably "Laura," a tenor sax solo by Don Byas, which is much better than the one he recorded in USA for the "American Record" label. Don plays two choruses in slow tempo. (This is one of the rare ten-inch records which lasts four minutes).

The Tyree Glenn Album presents the same musicians with the addition of Tyree Glenn on trombone and the French alto saxophonist Hubert Rostaing. They play "Billie's Bounce," "Mad Monk," "I Surrender Dear," "I Can't Get Started," "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone," "The Hour of Parting." The first four sides are the best. Again, Don Byas and Billy Taylor are in excellent form, and Buford Oliver "swings" the band. It is significant that Rostaing plays much better with these musicians than he has ever played when backed by a French rhythm section. "The Hour of Parting" is too sweet and sentimental and the solos on "Please Don't Talk" are not as good as in the other numbers, but on the whole it is a very successful album.

Another swing session was made by five musicians only: Byas, Taylor, Buford Oliver, Tilché, Bouchety. Only three sides have been released till now: "Rosetta," which is almost entirely played by Buford as a drum solo—and a very good one—, "I'm Beginning to See the Light," and "Body and Soul," featuring mostly Don Byas. Next to Coleman Hawkins's "Body and Soul," Don's solo is undoubtedly the best tenor sax performance of this famous number.

Another fine colored tenor saxophonist, "Big Boy" Goodie, who had already made many recordings in Europe before the war, recorded some excellent trio sides with piano and drums for Swing towards the end of 1946. The titles are "Big Boy Boogie," "Dizzie Boogie," "Blue Drag," "What Is This Thing Called Love?" The pianist is Charlie "Dizzie" Lewis, who has been living in France for many years and was put in a concentration camp during the war by the Germans. The drummer Mac Kac, a French Gypsy, has amazing speed and a nice beat.

Rex Stewart, of Ellingtonia fame, made no less than twenty sides for Blue Star in December 1947, with the small band he brought from the States. This band includes Sandy Williams on trombone and two very gifted young musicians: Ted Curry (drums) and Vernon Story (tenor sax). Among the best sides are "Georgia on My Mind," a trumpet solo by Rex in slow tempo; "Madeleine," dedicated to the French jazz critic Madeleine Gautier, a charming tune composed by Stewart himself; "Bebop Boogie," featuring Vernon Story; "Just Squeeze Me," "Don't Get Much Around Anymore," both featuring Rex Stewart's "wa-wa" trumpet; "I Cried for You," almost entirely played by Sandy Williams on trombone. Two sides, "Night and Day" and "Confessin'," were not recorded by the regular band but only by Rex on trumpet, Django Rheinhardt on guitar, Hubert Rostaing on alto sax, and Ted Curry on drums.

Rex was also recorded by Blue Star during his concert at the Salle

(*Continued on page* 54)

—Feher.

Claude Luter's Band—"an overnight hit . . . in Nice."

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HITS AND MISSES

ANY gentle-mannered addict of the phonograph must have had the galling experience of playing records for friends who enthusiastically asked to hear this or that—and who then yammered on unmercifully during the music. Such friends really deserve short shrift, but it is hard to shorten the shrift without imperiling the friendship. One sound maneuver, if the friends' disposition can be spotted far enough in advance, is to pretend that the phonograph exploded the day before yesterday. Another is to whip the conversation quickly toward some such irresistible topic as the sexual theories of Wilhelm Reich. Still another is to stock up on records which, so far as you are concerned, could be played in the midst of a Henry Wallace caucus, and to get them spinning before the friends have time to think of anything else. This is always precarious, however, for at least one of the callers is always likely to make specific demand for one of your favorite discs (how does he always manage to remember them?) which he will presently accompany with a roar of commentary and general observation.

Yet there are, undoubtedly, many purposes served by the kind of music which cannot be damaged by the cocktail party's clamor or the more intimate dither of family gossip. It was Erik Satie, I think, who composed what he called *musique d'ameublement*—"furniture music"—which fitted a room as pleasantly but unassertively as a handsome *escritoire*. It could be attended to or not, as one wished. Among this department's choices in this regard have long been the piano solos of Eddy Duchin. And this month's popular-record lists furnish still more admirable *musique d'ameublement*. From abroad comes a subdued, judicious album called "Rhythm on Reeds" (London LA—26, $3.94) in which the British ensemble of Phil Green, featuring flute, oboe, and clarinet, addresses itself to such delightful material as "Fascinating Rhythm," "Moonglow," "Mood Indigo," "Babette," "Smoke Rings," "Creole Love Song," "Cherokee," and "Caravan." Not only are the tunes first class; the arrangements are bland and tasteful, and while the musical gentility of the whole effect makes it perfectly possible to go on shaking daiquiris or aspersing Stalin, the sophisticated ear may gather that the oboe is none other than the London Philharmonic's masterly Leon Goossens—our nomination for the job these many years—while the clarinet is the distinguished Reginald Kell.

Except for a few rhetorical passages and agitations in the brass, another imported album also makes splendid furniture music; this is the "Cole Porter Suite" (London LA-19, $4.20) in which Louis Levy's Concert Orchestra gives discreet, handsome publication to several of the master's most famous tunes—"Begin the Beguine" and "In the Still of the Night" are especially satisfying. The orchestration is free from the whipped-cream sculptures and popcorn festoons of Andre Kostelanetz and suggests, rather, a rich plush on which any mannerly social occasion might be glad to rest itself.

But voices, too, can lend themselves to *musique d'ameublement*. In the album of Benny Goodman-Peggy Lee revivals (Columbia C170, $3.90) there are three wistful, quiescent efforts by Miss Lee which will do very well indeed: "Where or When," "On the Sunny Side of the Street," and "The Way You Look Tonight." In these she is accompanied by the Goodman Sextet in such delicate and appealing fashion that the musical furniture may even stimulate general silence and close inspection.

Among the month's records which, so far as we are concerned, call for direct attention there is, chiefly, a giant double offer by Frank Sinatra: "Kiss Me Again" and "Melancholy Baby" (Columbia 38287, 75¢). Seldom do our leading singers favor us with two such classics on a single disc. This department admits to a slight fatigue with "Melancholy" but is especially glad to have Sinatra's relaxed artistry in "Kiss Me," which is usually sung under a pressure smacking of the boiler room. Which reminds us that the country has recently been treated to the resurrection of a genuine, old-style, concert-hall love song, "Because," composed for tenor, kid gloves, and potted palm. The version most commonly heard is Perry Como's but his dulcet manner is not at all the caper. Como has been bred to colloquial romancing, at which he is a master, but the formal nosegays of "Because" require the barrel-chested, Red Seal protestations of Jan Peerce (RCA Victor, 10-1454, $1). Mr. Peerce gives the song just what it deserves: the real apoplectic lift, the true force of Gigli in the shower.

WILDER HOBSON.

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THE OTHER SIDE

DESPITE recent efforts to interest buyers in home-recorded opera, the natural and understandable inclination is still to a European performance. There is no reason for exercising musical chauvinism in this respect. Protestations of American competence cannot substitute for European style and authority, indefinable qualities abundantly present in some recently arrived imports.

Monteverdi's "Orfeo" claims a dual distinction: being one of the best as well as one of the first operas to have graced the lyric stage. To marvel that the melodies and harmonies of this music appear new-minted and daring three and a half centuries later is to indulge in an overworked cliche. Suffice it, then, to suggest that "Orfeo" will appeal more to the admirer of Benjamin Britten than of Umberto Giordano. The recorded performance (Italian HMV DB 5370/81) is a decade old, but now generally available in this country for the first time in many years. Recording technique seems a bit primitive by 1948 standards.

Space does not allow a proper appreciation of Berlioz's "La Damnation de Faust," a work glistening with melodic invention and orchestral ebullience. The complete recording (French Col. LXF 614/28), circa 1943, cannot be called a thing of unadulterated excellence. Though made in the spacious Palais de Chaillot, scene of the UN General Assembly, these discs sound as if recorded in a padded cell. Once the ear becomes acclimated to dull tonal characteristics, however, artistic virtues begin to commend themselves. Mona Laurena, George Jouatte, and Paul Cabanel—the principal singers—are of such distinction that one cannot balk too much at their undue prominence vis-à-vis the orchestra. Jean Fournet directs the undertaking. If a bit deficient in imagination, he at least never senselessly dramatizes or sweetens Berlioz's musical thought.

Britten's "Rape of Lucretia," abridged by the composer especially for discs and recorded by the original Glyndebourne cast (HMV C 3699/706), makes a pretty complement to "Orfeo." The use of chamber orchestra, modal harmonies, and classical text are a few points of similarity. Britten's music always impresses as the product of a powerful and inventive mind. At times, as in the women's trio on side six, the writing rises to great beauty. Other passages in this uneven opera strike one as more admirable than ingratiating. But we must take our operatic blessings these days as they come.

R. G.

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THE YOUNGER SET

WITH the cost of living slowly soaring out of sight, it is comforting to find some commodity useful in the household pegged at 29¢, slightly more than a quarter, the fourth part of a dollar—and less than a quarter pound of butter. We speak of the new series of six-inch records for the very young launched this month by Simon & Schuster under the title of "Golden Records." Derived from the remarkably popular series of "Golden Books," the discs are well-recorded, unbreakable, shrewdly divided between a story to a side, and one side story, one side musical classic.

Taste as well as care is evident in the selection of material and performers. Most of the actual performance is done by Irene Wicker, famous as the Singing Lady of radio. Alec Wilder has done many of the musical settings, with a blend of craft and simplicity which is rather novel in this field. Mitchell Miller, well known as a virtuoso oboe player, is the musical director and an able one.

Included in the series are such pairings as "Tootle" and a "Norwegian Dance" of Grieg; "Little Pee Wee" and the "Turkish March" of Mozart, "The Shy Little Kitten" and Tchaikovsky's "Humoresque." These are frankly experimental, providing the parent with an opportunity to try out musical works of worth on the youngster, at a minimum price. The playing is musicianly, the recording uncommonly clear, though sometimes a little boomy for a small machine.

The more conventional pairing of stories offers, as typical items, "The Tall Giraffe" and "The Funny Little Mouse," "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod" and "Storm in the Bath Tub," "Out of the Window" and "The Busy Elevator." Some of the titles, such as "Circus Time" (a two-side job) parallel books in the printed series, allowing for correlation of aural and visual experience.

Continuing its Composer Series, which began with Igor Stravinsky, the Young Peoples Club has turned to the American composer Aaron Copland for its second issue (YPR 408, $1.59, unbreakable). Selections are offered from "The Lincoln Portrait," "Billy the Kid," "Appalachian Spring," and "El Salon Mexico"—an excess of generosity, we think, on two sides of a ten-inch record. A slight story is interspersed, but it might all have been easier for young listeners to grasp had fewer words been utilized, and more repetition provided to familiarize them with Copland's style. Walter Hendl directs members of the New York Philharmonic in performances which are stylistically good, but a bit over-recorded.

Otherwise, the fall releases are mostly for the very young, particularly in the song category. Oustanding is Alec Templeton's presentation of A. A. Milne's favorite "Songs of Christopher Robin" (RCA Victor Y 26, $2.25, unbreakable). The fine selection includes "Buckingham Palace," "Hoppity," "Halfway Down," and "Christopher Robin is Saying his Prayers." Templeton's charm, his distinctive voice and piano playing are certain to delight the youngsters. Also from RCA Victor (Y 30, $2.50) are "Adventures in Mother Goose," sung by Jack Arthur, a new, agreeable children's artist. Other nursery news concerns "Nursery Rhymes" (Capitol D.B.S. 90, $2.36), sung by Ben Carson, a compilation of twenty-two verses, adapted by Allan Livingston, with music by Billy May. As an additional feature, there are illustrations for coloring.

Also for the young listener are a zooful of animal records, mostly undomesticated: "Rhumpy the Rhino" (Columbia M. J. 47, $2.29), "Clara the Curious Cow" (Columbia 90038), "Whoa Little Horses, Lie Down" (Y.P.R. $1.59), and "Bugs Bunny and the Tortoise" (Capitol D. B. X93, $3.68), are representative. The "Horses" setting has some story elements to invite activity, though the music vetoes the impulse, but most certainly to be shunned is the "Bugs Bunny" presentation, a life-sized version of the smart alec, thoroughly repulsive comic character augmented by colored illustrations. A waste of wax and paper!

Older children will enjoy the new "Tex Ritter" album (Capitol D. C. 91, $3.85), which includes "Animal Fair," "Big Rock Candy Mountain," etc. Ritter's warm, informal voice is assisted by some wonderful sound effects in the creation of a very real picture of Western life. Admirers of the Song Spinners will find them happily employed in "Holidays in Song," along with Jack Arthur and the orchestra of Henri Rene. (RCA Victor Y 31, $3.15). Eighteen songs commemorating as many American holidays are musically undistinguished. Arthur deserves better material.

For owners of players employing Long Playing records, Columbia offers pairings of "Many Moons" and "Eager Piano" (J. L. 8002, $2.85), and "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and the "Gingerbread Boy" (J. L. 8003, $2.85). Forthcoming soon is the complete "Hansel and Gretel," on two L. P. records—a problem for a Christmas stocking, but one which invites solution.

MARIE L. MUTCH.

POSTWAR JAZZ IN FRANCE

(*Continued from page* 51)

Pleyel in Paris, and six twelve-inch sides were issued under the title "Rex Stewart at the Salle Pleyel": "Mobile Bay," "I Can't Get Started," "The Man I Love," "I Cover the Waterfront," "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Cotton Tail." Although the recording is far from excellent, there are some very good spots, and the shouts from the audience show what a wonderful reception Rex's band had in Paris.

Among the French musicians, Django Rheinhardt's Hot Club Quintet has been particularly active in the recording field during recent years. "Lentement, Mademoiselle" (Swing), "Blues Primitif," "Folie A Amphion," a swing version of the "Anniversary Song" (all on Blue Star) and many others prove that Django's artistry is greater than ever. Claude Luter's band which became an overnight hit at the recent International Jazz Festival in Nice has already made quite a few recordings. The best sides are "Muskrat Ramble" / "Shreveport Blues" (Swing) and "High Society" / "Didn't He Ramble" (Pacific), which these youngsters perform in the true style of King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. Another excellent record in the New Orleans tradition is "Tin Roof Blues" / "Jazz Me Blues" by Claude Abadie's orchestra (Swing).

Finally, a rather unusual recording by two young French pianists, Eddy Bernard and André Persiany, should be mentioned: "Cuttin' Contest" (Blue Star). Bernard plays in the Fats Waller "stride" style, while Persiany uses the "blocked chords" created by Milt Buckner (of Lionel Hampton's band). Both are very gifted, and it is an amazing contrast to hear them on the same record, as they do not play together but take choruses alternately.

HUGUES PANASSIE AND
ANDY GURWITCH.

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TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER

(*Continued from page 44*)

discs would be priced at about $1.75. Finally, Class C would be a listing of *all* records for which stampers are available. Special pressings would be made to order from these, at a cost of about $2.50. In this category would be found the vast majority of acoustical waxings, together with out-dated electricals like the old Weingartner version of Mozart's "Symphony No. 39." (Before the war, record companies used to make special "White Label" pressings of any deleted disc, but such business was discouraged through the charging of exorbitant prices. The service has not been resumed.) To a layman, this plan seems to possess considerable merit, and it would be interesting to learn the reactions of Mr. Hall's confreres at RCA Victor and Columbia.

Another answer, or rather palliative, to the deletion problem would be the establishment of some central record archive. Many cut-out recordings are of great importance to the musical researcher and historian. Should a scholar want to study Franz Schalk's interpretation of the Beethoven "Fifth," however, he would have to rely on a cut-out store and pay $9.75—a sum well beyond most researchers. Requirements of this nature could effectively be met by a complete library of recorded music. No such repository yet exists, but its need becomes more urgent with every passing year.

Since both these proposals smack of utopianism, a concrete suggestion based on the status quo might be in order. Granted that the rare-record business is here to stay, there should at least be a reasonable code of ethics to protect the unwitting consumer. A policy rampant in the cut-out field is to leave the price of a record indeterminate, so as to get from it what the traffic will bear. I know of a collector who owned one of a two-record Telefunken set and was extremely anxious to acquire the missing disc. It turned out that the cut-out record shop at which he inquired happened to have the odd disc in its stock. The collector's need and his willingness to pay were accurately judged. The cost for one record of a Vivaldi Concerto Grosso: $15. Surely, if hard and fast prices were set on "rare recordings" and lists of same widely distributed (as is customary in the used-book business), the real music lover in search of a deleted record would get a better deal. And that neglected individual, it need hardly be said, deserves every possible break.

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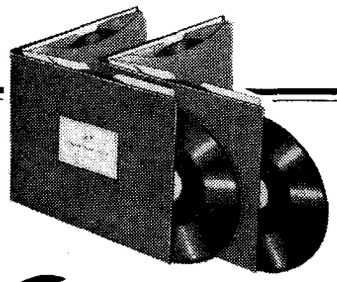

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Some Highs and Lows

A PRIMER ON SUPPRESSION

THE ARGUMENTS over H. H. Scott's principle of Dynamic Noise Suppression continue, and after a summer's work with three different models I am still in the field to defend it as a valuable adjunct to wide-range phonograph equipment and as a potentially useful gadget, simplified and lower priced, on the standard commercial home phonograph.

But few arguments will be settled as long as we speak of "the" suppressor. There are already three general types, the radio-station model used for broadcast records, the fancy phonograph amplifiers-with-suppressor, and various simplified versions built into ready-made phonographs or attachable. More important, there are several fundamentally different types of control system, and since no suppressor is better than its controls—when we dubs are turned loose on them—it is hardly accurate to judge the whole breed by any single performance.

The basis of the dynamic suppressor, whichever form, is not as some might think, to separate noise from music like a cream separator. That is impossible. Instead it follows a line of very cagey reasoning on Scott's part. Most noise is found in the higher frequencies. The usual remedy is the tone control (or filter) which cuts down all higher tones, the music with the noise. A sacrifice. But—a vital difference—noise on a record is steady in volume, whereas music soars from loud to soft. Music is *dynamic* in volume. Moreover when music is soft we most mind the noise; louder music drowns it out.

Why not, then, devise an automatic tone control to *respond to volume*, that opens up when volume is high, closes down when it is low? True, the suppressor can't tell music from noise; but since it is the music, not the noise that changes volume, the music will be in control—which is precisely what we want. Ingenious! But not so simple in practice. A farther step is to arrange two sets of tone-control "gates," one to control the higher tones, the other for the bass, to remove assorted rumbles and thumps when no louder bass music is present. Because these gates are all-electronic with no moving parts —they will work as fast or as slowly as you will, to cover any situation; the adjustment can be instantaneous.

The principle is both simple and wonderful. It is the application that is difficult. A thousand questions must be answered. At what volume shall the gates begin to open and when shall they reach full width? What shall be the limits, both open and closed? Above all, how much control over all this shall we entrust to the doughty operator, so that he can best match a million and one very different records?

In the working out, three main control functions seem to be most important, aside from the bass gate, which takes care of itself inconspicuously. Once the idea of the tone-control gate is clear, they aren't too hard to visualize. First, the gates must be adjustable so that they open and close within the volume range of the music; thus, as they open, the music is always a bit louder than the noise let through. If the gates open too soon more noise will be passed than can be covered up by the louder music and you'll hear a fine swish. Second, we may control the extent that high tones are cut down when the gates are closed, the music at low volume, how much noise is cut out (and music too, of course). At the risk of mixing metaphors I'll call this the *floor*. If so, then another control, the wider range of tones allowed through at loud volume when the gates are open wide, is of course the *ceiling*, and you can imagine, in topsy-turvy fashion, the gates bouncing from floor to ceiling as the music goes soft and loud! Think again of your manual tone control as though automatically driven by the musical volume: first, what volume shall it respond to—when shall its movement begin; second, how far "down" shall it turn with music at low volume, and third, how far up shall it go—if not all the way—when the music is at full volume?

It is in the controls for these three functions that the various brands of suppressor differ greatly. Goodell and Fisher, also others, feel that the most important adjustment you, the user, should make is the first ("gate sensitivity") at what volume levels the gates work. Turn this adjustment down, and it takes louder music to open the gates up and so more noise is covered; with less noisy records the gates can be changed to open sooner, thereby letting through more music.

However, H. H. Scott provides a very different control, though unfortunately at first glance it may look the same. His main control is a *variable floor*. When you turn this, instead of changing the volume level needed to open the gates, you change the depth to which the gates cut down on the highs when they close. After all (he may have thought) it's in the soft parts that we notice noise most; the usual remedy for noise is tone-control—let's have *more* tone control, in the soft parts, for the noisier records.

The one-knob simplified suppressors now installed in some phonographs may well become more widely and cheaply available. Combining several controls in one, they aren't very adaptable to changing conditions. But since nine-tenths of noise and distortion trouble comes in the tonal ranges still completely beyond most home machines, these suppressors can loaf along; they'll further reduce the already low noise for you, with minimum damage to the part of the music that you do get to hear.

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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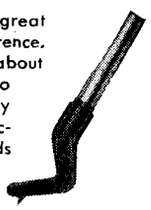

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Recordings Reports on Current Pop Releases

PERFORMER, SONG, DATA	REPORT
Ambrose, Bert: "Hors D' Oeuvres." London album LA 27, $3.94.	Revivals of eight sides which this brilliant English band made in the middle Thirties. The high gloss and notable spirit of the playing is still impressive, but the orchestrations have dated sadly. Still romantically attractive are "Caramba" and "Maracas" from Don Marzedo's "Cuban Suite."
Boswell, Connie: "Underneath the Arches." Columbia 38298, 75¢.	The "Arches" number has been a sentimental smash in England and is juking along rapidly over here. If its simple, jogging, catching melody is hardly deserving of the warmly vigorous Boswell voice, the New Orleans lady still can make you like almost anything. "It's All My Fault" is the companion side.
Butterfield, Billy: "What's New?" Capitol 15186, 79¢.	The theme song of Butterfield's orchestra, "What's New?" is the memorable old Bob Haggart tune which began life as an instrumental called "I'm Free." This isn't the best performance Butterfield has done of it—maybe playing it a thousand times or so has its effect, after all—but it's nice to have these pleasant strains around again.
Cugat, Xavier: "Samba with Cugat." Columbia album C165, $3.15.	Six Brazilian or Brazilian-style numbers by the Latin-American Paul Whiteman, who, like his northern vis-à-vis, can be very good or very horrid. Here he's thoroughly entertaining for the most part, though chief pleasure derives from two Latin classics: the rousing "Tico Tico" and the great "Brazil."
De Vol, Frank: "Viennese Waltzes." Capitol album CD98, $3.94.	At best, interpretations of Strauss, Lehar, Ivanovici, et cie. can be ear-filling things, impelling to dancers and listeners alike. These are far from the best, however, with an air of New Year's Eve, pre-record-ban haste about them.
Dorsey, Tommy, and his "Clambake Seven." RCA Victor album P220, $4.	Echoes of the mid-Thirties, employing such able echo-makers as Max Kaminsky, trumpet, Bud Freeman, sax, Dave Tough, drums, and Edythe Wright and Jack Leonard, vocalists. The music they produced was studiedly unpolished and joyful, thoroughly commercial, but durable enough to be listenable still. Titles include "Shiek of Araby," "Josephine," and that raucous classic "The Music Goes 'Round and 'Round."
Gillespie, Dizzy: "Manteca." RCA Victor 20-3023. 75¢.	The goateed powerhouse that Gillespie commands is notably successful in this cubanesque impression. With it is "Cool Breeze," in which Dizzy and his baritone singer Kenny Haygood scat themselves almost to inanity.
Jackson, Chubby: "The Happy Monster." MGM 10228, 75¢.	By title, this might seem a stray from "The Younger Set," but it is merely Jackson's wont to bill himself this way, likewise the record. Three minutes of moderately absorbing bebop, marred by too many cliches of the style.
Jacquet, Illinois: "Symphony in Sid." RCA Victor 20-3060, 75¢.	Tasteful reeding from Illinois, a restful respite from his peanut whistle days. Also involved is a baritone saxer, probably Leo Parker, a new name to whom attention is hereby directed.
Kenton, Stan: "Bongo Riff." Capitol 15179, 79¢.	Virtuoso work by the orchestra, particularly by the brilliant bongo buster Jack Costanzo. Something uncommon in large band coloration, proving that the possibilities are there, if a maestro is enterprising enough. For the reverse side Capitol has chosen wisely in reviving "Willow Weep for Me," one of Kenton's best pop renditions.
Marmarosa, Dodo: "Lover." Dial 1025, $1.05.	Richard Rodgers would hardly recognize his fragile waltz as appropriated by the bebopers, but if it has to be unrecognizable, this is as good as one is likely to hear. Marmarosa's piano is agreeable if unsensational, buoyed by Jackie Mills's drumming and a cello in place of the usual bass. An interesting experiment (once toyed with by Artie Shaw) but hardly a substitute for the real support provided by the bigger instrument. "Dary Departs," over-side, is dextrous Dodo, with fine wire-brushing by Mills.

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Letters to the *RECORDINGS* Editor

What of "Queen Mab"?

SIR: Last fall RCA released Berlioz's "Romeo and Juliet" symphony —that is, all but the last movement, the "Queen Mab" scherzo. This was to be released later, and placed in the spare album pocket which was not provided.

Queen Mab was last seen in the vicinity of Camden, but no word of her whereabouts has been received since. . . . Apparently the Camdenites are holding Queen Mab prisoner, possibly in solitary confinement. Let all the followers of Queen Mab band together to effect her release!

WILLARD T. SOMERVILLE.

Elmhurst, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *RCA Victor's Department of Missing Persons reports that nothing new is known in the "Queen Mab" case. Unofficial sources point out, however, that hundreds of other "mothers" are in similar straits, and if it is a case of confinement, it is certainly not solitary.*

Concerning Reissues

SIR: In the matter of reissues, it seems to me that vocal enthusiasts are getting all the breaks, and fiddle fans nothing. . . . . About 1928 Columbia put out a Bach album which contained . . . a recording of the "Chaconne" by the violist Lionel Tertis. . . . In addition to being an excellent performance by a great artist . . . the quality of the recording, as I recall it, was pretty good. . . . I've also been wondering whether some of the record companies—such as Victor and its affiliates—do not have masters in their files of recordings by some of the great violinists of the past—Ysaye and Sauret, for example.

LOUIS F. HAUER.

Bryan, Tex.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The reason that vocal artists are favored in reissues is a fairly simple one—what they have to offer is more graphically preserved by antiquated recording than the performances of others, violinists included.*

A Vote for Hindemith

SIR: The recommendation for the recording of Hindemith's "Symphonic Metamorphosis on a theme of Carl Maria Von Weber" is heartily seconded. Also, isn't it about time that Fiedler's wonderful recording of Mozart's "Divertimento No. 15" (K. 287) be restored to the Victor catalogue?

NORMAN F. BRANDHORST.

St. Paul, Minn.

More L. P.

SIR: I am highly interested in the article . . . in which the new Long Playing discs were discussed. . . . Could you answer these questions:

1) Recently I purchased a dual-speed motor "The Green Flyer" . . . If used with the new pickup necessary . . . would reproduction be satisfactory?

2) Do these new, super-light pickups utilize a magnet, such as in the GE cartridge? Would any amplifier changes be necessary?

ROBERT GATES.

Providence, R. I.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *There is no reason why the motor you describe should not give satisfactory results, with the right pickup. However, the Astatic pickup, like the Philco, uses a crystal cartridge. Since it has not yet appeared on the market, further knowledge of it is not available. However, it seems reasonable that it will team efficiently with an amplifier adapted to the GE pickup.*

Concerning Test Pressings

SIR: Is it possible to get "test" (White Label) pressings of new records which always have flawless surfaces? If so, where can I get them and for how much?

ALLEN BALSBAUGH.

Wellesley Hills, Mass.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *It would please the record makers to know that White Label pressings always have flawless surfaces." In any case, these discs are not for sale, being made only for inter-office purposes.*

Woody's "Flame"

SIR: Could you tell me if Woody Herman's "Blue Flame" is still being pressed or is it withdrawn? I have a very old record of this and would sell it if it is worth anything.

GAIL CONWAY.

Minneapolis, Minn.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The current Decca catalogue lists "Blue Flame" and the companion side "Misirlou" on No. 25151. The presumption is that it is available, at no premium.*

The "Basic Library"

SIR: I have been reading your record supplement from the start, and can find only one thing to keep it from being tops. That is the ill-chosen groupings of the "Basic Library." As yet there hasn't been any Brahms, Schubert, Haydn, Bach, Chopin (I missed one issue, so one of these may be in). Also, in the Beethoven, all nine symphonies, the piano concertos were listed . . . but not the Rasoumovsky quartets, the violin and piano sonatas, etc. . . .

KENNETH OBERMAN.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *As might be noted from the listings, this is, to date, a "Basic Library" of orchestral works, rather than a comprehensive survey of each composer's total output. Chamber music and solo works will follow in due course. As for Brahms, his symphonies, concerti, etc., were evaluated in the issue of February 1946. For those who may have noted its absence, the survey will appear next month.*

Washington Calling

SIR: Can you help me find any of the following records? There is not one of them in Washington, D.C., and no shop here can give me any clue as to where they can be discovered.

Victor DM 212—Liturgical Music
Columbia M-231 "Palestrina"
Columbia 4141-42—Gounod "Messe Solenelle"
Victor M-768—Russian Liturgical Music

J. V. CHILDS.

Washington, D.C.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *It is the professed intention of Columbia to restore everything of durable interest in its catalogue, which would certainly seem to include the items above. However, I have not yet seen the Victor albums mentioned in your letter as among those again available.*

RECORD MART

RECORD MART is designed to provide a bulletin board on which may be posted buyers' or sellers' notice of anything odd, unusual, rare, or out of print on discs or the accessories thereto. Individuals as well as dealers may submit their offerings of duplicated discs, rare labels, old acoustics, society sets, private issues, or withdrawn items, albums, needles, record brushes, or the like. Rate: 25¢ per word; 12-word minimum. Count two extra words for box and number. Full payment must be received fifteen days before publication. We forward all mail received in answer to box numbers and submit postage bills periodically. Mail to be called for at this office will be held thirty days only. Address: RECORD MART, The Saturday Review, 25 West 45 Street, New York 19, N. Y.

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Records Over the Nation

A Dealer Survey of Top Record Sellers

City and Store	*Popular Singles*	*Popular Albums*	*Classical Singles*	*Classical Albums*
ATLANTA *(Tyler's Gramophone Shop)*	It's Magic (C)	Previn Plays (RCA)	Toccata & Fugue (EDA)	Songs of Auvergne (C)
BERKELEY, CALIF. *(Berkeley Music House)*	My Happiness (Cap)	Bing Crosby (C)	Purcell Sonata (EDA)	Songs of Auvergne (C)
BIRMINGHAM *(Stairway to Music)*	It's Magic (C)	Al Jolson, Vol. III (D)	Minuet in G (RCA)	Schumann Piano Concerto (C)
BOSTON *(Boston Music Co.)*	Maybe You'll Be There (D)	Glenn Miller (RCA)	Bluebird (RCA)	Nutcracker Suite (C)
(Mosher Music Co.)	Underneath the Arches (L)	Scotch Bagpipe (D)	Paganini Variations (RCA)	Tchaikovsky Fifth (RCA)
DALLAS *(The Record Shop)*	You Call Everybody (Reg)	Manhattan Tower (D)	Bluebird (RCA)	Khatchaturian Violin Concerto (M)
(Whittle Music Co.)	You Call Everybody (Reg)	Manhattan Tower (D)	Bluebird (RCA)	Chopin Favorites (RCA)
DETROIT *(Doubleday Book Shop)*	You Came a Long Way (RCA)	Previn Plays (RCA)	Fiddle Faddle (L)	Chopin Favorites (RCA)
DENVER *(Knight Campbell Music Co.)*	My Happiness (Cap)	Emperor Waltz (D)	Bluebird (RCA)	Chopin Favorites (RCA)
KANSAS CITY, MO. *(Jenkins Music Co.)*	You Can't Be True (R)	Lady at the Organ (Triumph)	Fiddle Faddle (RCA)	Bolero (RCA)
LOS ANGELES *(Birkel-Richardson Co.)*	A Tree in the Meadow (Cap)	Songs of Our Times (D)	Otello Duet (Ital. C)	Verdi Requiem (RCA)
MEMPHIS *(Gage & Co.)*	It's Magic (C)		Because (RCA)	Carmen Excerpts (C)
(Words & Music)	You Call Everybody (Reg)	Rose Marie (RCA)	Indian Love Call (RCA)	Lucia (P)
MINNEAPOLIS *(Don Leary's, Inc.)*	You Call Everybody (M)	Songs of Our Times (D)	Fiddle Faddle (RCA)	Rhapsody in Blue (C)
NASHVILLE *(MU Sound System)*	You Call Everybody (M)	Theme Songs (RCA)	Nutcracker Suite (D)	Chopin Favorites (RCA)
NEW ORLEANS *(Van Husen Music Co.)*	Love Somebody (C)	Previn Plays (RCA)	Donkey Serenade (RCA)	Chopin Favorites (RCA)
NEW YORK *(Doubleday Book Shop)*	The Three Bells (C.)	Manhattan Tower (D)	Salome—Final Scene (RCA)	Mozart Concerto No. 23 (EDA)
(Dynamic Electronic)	It's Magic (RCA)	Annie Get Your Gun (D)	Light Cavalry (RCA)	Masquerade (RCA)
(Haynes-Griffin)	It's Magic (D)	Ray Noble (C)	Music of the Spheres (RCA)	Chopin Favorites (RCA)
(Heins & Bolet)	It's Magic (C)	Songs of Our Times (D)	Orpheus in Hades (RCA)	Chopin Favorites (RCA)
(Liberty Music Shops)	It's Magic (C)	Songs of Our Times (D)	Clair de Lune (RCA)	Strauss Waltzes (L)
(Rabson's)	My Happiness (D)	Morales Rhumbas (Coda)	Seven Veils (RCA)	Songs of Auvergne (C)
OMAHA *(Lyon & Healy, Inc.)*	It's Magic (C)	Inside USA (RCA)	Bluebird (RCA)	Peter Grimes (EDA)
PHILADELPHIA *(Jacobs Bros.)*	12th Street Rag (Cap)	Records for the Millions (C)	Sonetto del Petrarca (RCA)	Chopin Favorites (RCA)
(The Record Shop)	12th Street Rag (Cap)	Reyes Rhumbas (Cap)	Sabre Dance (RCA)	Rosenkavalier Suite (C)
PITTSBURGH *(National Record Mart)*	12th Street Rag (Cap)	Previn Plays (RCA)	Bluebird (RCA)	Vocal Waltzes (RCA)
PORTLAND, ORE. *(The Record Shop)*	Love Somebody (C)		Warsaw Concerto (RCA)	Danses Concertantes (RCA)
ROCHESTER *(Esler's)*	12th Street Rag (Cap)	Stan Kenton (Cap)	Bluebird (RCA)	Chopin Favorites (RCA)
ST. LOUIS *(Doubleday Book Shop)*	You Call Everybody (D)	Up in Central Park (D)	Clair de Lune (RCA)	Beethoven Eroica (RCA)
SEATTLE *(Hopper-Kelly Co.)*	My Happiness (D)	Oklahoma! (D)	Fiddle Faddle (RCA)	Bolero (RCA)

Key: C—Columbia Cap—Capitol D—Decca EDA—English Decca L—London M—Mercury P—Parlophone R—Rondo RCA—Victor Reg—Regent

Leaders: As eagerly and hopefully anticipated by the record industry, cooler weather has brought along some fairly respectable best sellers. The popular single field is dominated by "It's Magic," with eight entries, and "You Call Everybody Darling," with six. Buying trends are still spotty as regards popular albums; André Previn, on RCA Victor, and "Songs of Our Times," on Decca, hold a slight edge over other issues. In the classical single category, preference is shown for RCA Victor's "Bluebird of Happiness," a by no means new release. The month's most striking tabulation appears among classical albums, where "Chopin Favorites" as played by the First Piano Quartet has taken a clear-cut lead. It is encouraging to note, also, the three entries of Madeleine Grey's "Auvergne" songs.

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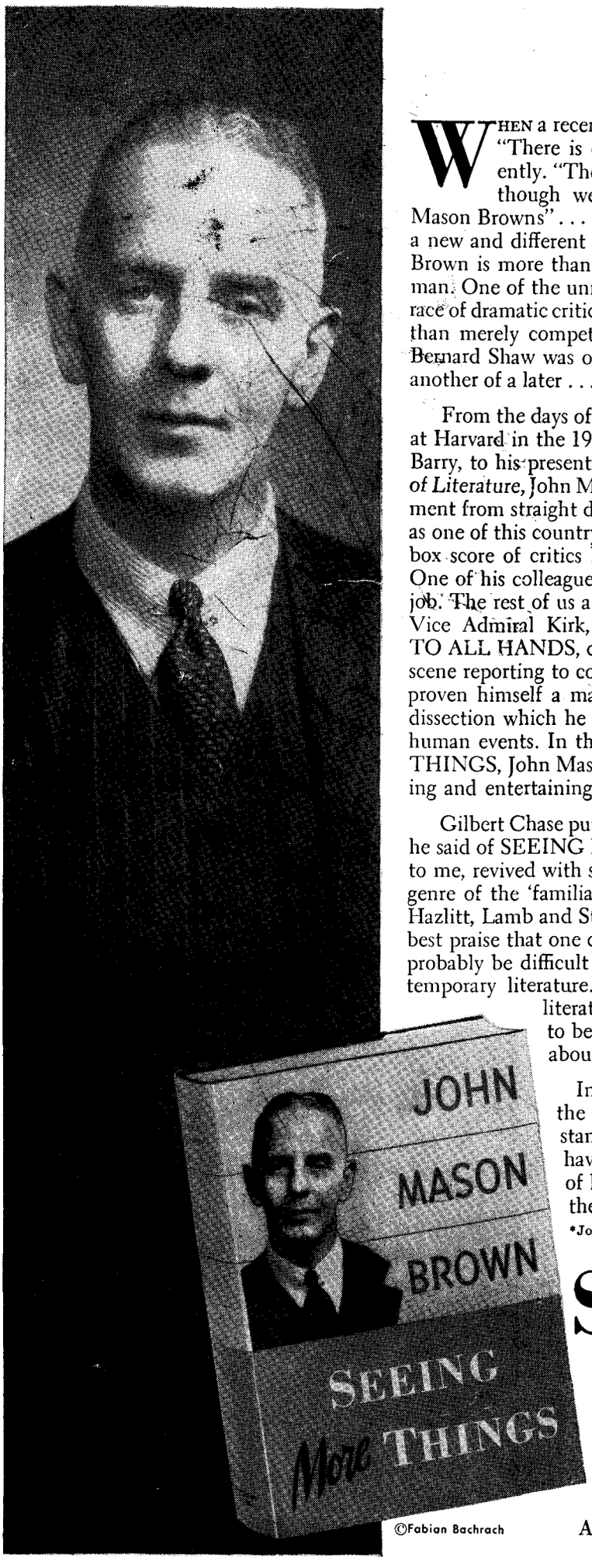

Not one but many

WHEN a recent Brown lecture ended one woman turned to another. "There is only one John Mason Brown," she whispered reverently. "There will never be another." We beg to differ, Madame, though we applaud your sentiment. "There are many John Mason Browns" . . . "May there always be another." Each book has shown a new and different side to his character. Each new book by John Mason Brown is more than a publishing event; it is an event in the growth of a man. One of the unique personalities of our time, he is "the latest of that race of dramatic critics who have translated themselves into something more than merely competent and sprightly reporters of last night's spectacle. Bernard Shaw was one of an earlier generation. Alexander Woollcott was another of a later . . ."*

From the days of Professor George Pierce Baker's famous 47 Workshop at Harvard in the 1920's where he worked with Thomas Wolfe and Philip Barry, to his present column SEEING THINGS in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, John Mason Brown's readers have watched his steady development from straight drama critic to essayist of first rank. For fourteen years, as one of this country's most competent critics, he topped *Variety's* annual box score of critics hits and misses more often than any other reviewer. One of his colleagues said then, "He is the only one really trained for the job. The rest of us are just interested in the theatre." Later, as an Aide to Vice Admiral Kirk, he wrote MANY A WATCHFUL NIGHT and TO ALL HANDS, considered by many reviewers some of the best on-the-scene reporting to come out of the war. Today as a columnist-critic he has proven himself a man not afraid to use the same immense capacity for dissection which he applied so tellingly to the arts, to the larger world of human events. In this new volume of engaging essays, SEEING MORE THINGS, John Mason Brown has produced a book that is both enlightening and entertaining, challenging and highly diverting.

Gilbert Chase put it nicely in the *Book-of-the-Month Club News*, when he said of SEEING MORE THINGS: John Mason Brown "has, it seems to me, revived with singular success, and in a highly personal manner, the genre of the 'familiar essay,' evoking with a modern touch the shades of Hazlitt, Lamb and Stevenson . . . They are clearly his masters and it is the best praise that one can bestow to say that he is worthy of them. It would probably be difficult to find better examples of the familiar essay in contemporary literature. To be familiar yet profound, informal yet highly literate, amusing yet serious, enthusiastic yet critical, and to be always on the side of the angels without being smug about it—this is Mr. Brown's unique accomplishment."

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*John William Rogers, *Chicago Sun.*

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